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# **One Who Gave His Life**

**War Letters of**

**Lieutenant Quincy Sharpe Mills**















# One Who Gave His Life

War Letters of

Quincy Sharpe Mills

With a Sketch of His Life and Ideals—A Study in  
Americanism and Heroism

By  
James Luby

*Quincy S. Mills.*

Lieutenant, 168th Regiment, U. S. A.

[With Portrait]


G. P. Putnam's Sons

New York & London

By the Author's Son

1911





Quincy S. Mills.

Lieutenant, 10th Regiment, U. S. A.



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New York & London  
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1923



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by  
Nannie S. Mills



Made in the United States of America



TO THE SOLDIERS OF THE RAINBOW DIVISION,  
HIS COMRADES IN COURAGE AND DEVOTION,  
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED BY THE PARENTS OF

**One Who Gave His Life**

205040







## FOREWORD

Many persons have contributed information and, some, personal narratives or appreciations to this memoir of the career of Quincy Sharpe Mills. To all, the author offers his heartfelt thanks. In general, specific mention is made of the contributors in the appropriate places.

In addition, thanks are due to Mr. Frank A. Munsey, at present the proprietor of *The (Evening) Sun*, for his kind permission to reprint editorials and other articles by Quincy Sharpe Mills, and matter referring to his career.







## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
<p>I.—A MONTH OF TRAGIC WAITING AND ITS CLIMAX —TRIBUTE AND INSPIRATION—TRADITIONS OF AN AMERICAN SOUTHERN FAMILY—THE SPIRIT OF LIBERTY IN OLD DAYS . . . . .</p>	3
<p>II.—THE CIVIL WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH OF GLOOM —TONIC INFLUENCES OF AN EX-CONFEDER- ATE HOME—A PICTURESQUE BOY AND HIS QUAINT SURROUNDINGS—EVOLUTION OF AN IDEAL . . . . .</p>	40
<p>III.—COLLEGE DAYS AT CHAPEL HILL, N. C.—AN EARNEST STUDENT WHO WAS "ONE OF THE BOYS"—FOOTING IT THROUGH THE BLUE RIDGE—VERSE GRAVE AND GAY . . . . .</p>	67
<p>IV.—A BOLD STEP AND ITS SUCCESS—INGENUOUS BOHEMIANISM OF A YOUNG NEWSPAPERMAN IN NEW YORK—DEVELOPMENT OF A CRITI- CAL MIND—PLAYS, POLITICS AND PHILO- SOPHY . . . . .</p>	110
<p>V.—ACTIVITIES AND ACQUAINTANCES OF A STAR REPORTER—ROOSEVELT AND MITCHEL— COLLEGE DEBTS PAID OFF—CONVENTIONS AND VACATIONS—RELIGIOUS STIRRINGS . . . . .</p>	141
<p>VI.—FIGHTING ON THE EDITORIAL FRONT LINE—A YOUNG APOSTLE OF PREPAREDNESS—RAPs AT ROOSEVELT—CLEAR PREVISION OF AMERICA'S ENTRY INTO THE WAR . . . . .</p>	169



CHAPTER	PAGE
VII.—FINAL TRAINING AT PLATTSBURG AND A FALSE START FOR FRANCE—DEPRESSING CONDI- TIONS AND AN INADEQUATE COMMISSION— ASSIGNMENT TO AN IOWA REGIMENT . . . . .	204
VIII.—A CHEERFUL VOYAGE TOWARD THE UNKNOWN— SOUL OF AN AMERICAN CRUSADER—WAR- TIME TYPES ON AN ATLANTIC LINER—IN A BRITISH REST CAMP . . . . .	230
IX.—AT LAST IN FRANCE—QUAINT AND GRIM HABITATIONS IN A GLITTERING WINTER LANDSCAPE—LANGRES AND FORT DE PEIGNEY—FRIENDLY FRENCH RELATIONS . . . . .	261
X.—BILLETED IN A VILLAGE—INTIMACIES OF FRENCH LIFE AT ST. CIERGUES—A LONE HAND IN RUNNING THE COMPANY—GAS MASKS—PLAYERS IN WAR—A COMPANY MASCOT . . . . .	301
XI.—REAL WAR—THE 168TH GOES INTO THE TRENCHES AT BADONVILLER—EXPERIENCES UNDER FIRE—FIGHTING AND RESTING— MARVELS OF CIVILIAN COURAGE . . . . .	330
XII.—PEACE OF A WAR TRAINING SCHOOL—CLIMATIC PARADOX OF SUNNY FRANCE—INSPIRING VISIT TO DOMREMY—TERRIBLE COST OF A VICTORY IN CHAMPAGNE . . . . .	385
XIII.—A SOLDIER'S DREAM—AFTER THE CHAMPAGNE DEFENSIVE, THE CHÂTEAU-THIERRY DRIVE —FULFILLMENT OF FATE AND SUPREME SACRIFICE—ASLEEP IN FRANCE—TRIBUTES . . . . .	442
INDEX . . . . .	483



## ILLUSTRATIONS

FACING  
PAGE

QUINCY SHARPE MILLS . . . . . Lieutenant, 168th Regiment, U. S. A.	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Q. S. THE JUNIOR . . . . . University of North Carolina, 1905-6.	92
Q. S. MILLS INTERVIEWING THEODORE ROOSEVELT IN 1912 . . . . .	155
LIEUTENANT QUINCY SHARPE MILLS . . . . . October, 1917.	456







**One Who Gave His Life**  
**War Letters of**  
**Lieutenant Quincy Sharpe Mills**







# One Who Gave His Life

## War Letters of Lieutenant Quincy Sharpe Mills

### CHAPTER I

A MONTH OF TRAGIC WAITING AND ITS CLIMAX—TRIBUTE AND INSPIRATION—TRADITIONS OF AN AMERICAN SOUTHERN FAMILY—THE SPIRIT OF LIBERTY IN OLD DAYS.

IN the mid-summer of 1918—that summer of universal dread—there came weeks of anguished waiting to a small family group and of mournful expectation to a large circle of friends. At last, on September 4, *The Evening Sun* of New York printed the following editorial:

#### QUINCY S. MILLS

The worst fears are now confirmed regarding the fate of Lieutenant Quincy S. Mills of the 168th Infantry. He was killed in battle near Épieds, between Château-Thierry and Fère-en-Tardenois, on July 26, the date from which he was reported as missing in the War Department Casualty bulletins. He was buried by Chaplain Robb of the 168th Infantry, and his resting place is marked and known.

His was a glorious end. He died not merely for his country but for mankind, for all the things that other men live for and will live for during countless generations. In one sense his fate is only an item in an epoch of tragedy and his sacrifice but a mite in a world of heroism. But to him and his friends



the tragedy and the sacrifice were and are immense because they are total. He gave all that man can give and those who loved him suffer utter bereavement which throbs in their souls with a pain that no faith can dull and no pride can compensate.

We single out this instance from the congeries of cruelties that is the life of today not because it is exceptional but because it is typical. And its phases of pain and pride come home to us with an intimate appeal. Mills was an editorial writer on *The Evening Sun* down to the day when he laid down his pen and took up the sword. He was a man of unusual qualities and promise, just ripening into the fulness of his powers. He held a serious attitude toward life. He was a conscientious student of public questions. He had high standards of honor and duty and an admirable gift of expression.

The field of journalism held a successful future for him, or he might have made his way and done good service in politics, towards which he had a natural bent. Prosperity and happiness seemed assured to him, when in common with so many other young Americans he gave up all for an ideal. Now night has closed over his hopes and his prospects, so far as this earth is concerned; but we cannot believe that such a spirit is altogether extinguished.

This book is written in the same spirit as the above article. Quincy Sharpe Mills was a young American of Southern birth, descent and tradition. He possessed remarkable natural gifts; he had an excellent training for his lifework; he was just gaining clear consciousness and full command of his powers; he had a career of usefulness and distinction before him as certain as anything can be in life.

He was of cheerful temperament and courageous outlook; he expected to do much work in the world, to do it well and to reap the reward in personal success. The future seemed bright for him in his own eyes as well as in the estimation of his friends.



But at an early day in the progress of the Great War, the star of duty and sacrifice rose on his horizon and its white gleam pierced his soul. From that time it was never obscured in his vision. No matter what other light dazzled or attracted him, that one purest ray wooed him on. He foresaw the entry of America into the struggle for freedom and humanity and he devoted himself to a share in his country's battle, regardless of the cost in hopes or in dreams.

He did not speak much about it, he made no great display of his purpose; but he was quietly resolute and resolutely practical. He entered at once upon a course of preparation for the work that he saw ahead. When the call came, although well above the obligatory age, he at once volunteered for the fighting line. He toiled his way into the army with a commission; he went to France with his regiment and there won the affection and respect of his brother officers and the hearts of his men; he was on the verge of promotion when death came to him in battle in the very act of exposing himself for the sake of others. Such was the climax to a career which combined an admirable simplicity with exaltation of pitch and amplitude of tone. Its sequel so far as he is concerned belongs to the realm of faith; but all higher instinct forbids us to doubt that his spirit rose out of the storm of combat through some gateway of new and fair opportunity. All that is left to those who loved him, here on earth, is a treasure of memories and a small legacy of the first fruits of his expanding powers.

This volume is planned to give definite form and longer duration to these memories and these relics. It is, in the first place, a tribute of appreciation and love. Many hearts, many minds and many pens have contributed to it besides his own. Many who knew him have united in the passionate wish that his figure should not fade altogether



out of the eyes of living men nor his spirit out of their recognition.

But their desire that he should not be forgotten for his own sake and on his own account is not the sole impulse that has prompted this compilation. It is believed that in the life of Mills as citizen and soldier the image of young American manhood as it shone in the days of crisis and consecration is typified. In its earnest endeavor, in its bountiful promise and in its maimed and untimely end; in its rich store of human interests—friendship, love, work, pleasure, trial, hope—and in the generous and willing sacrifice of these in response to a noble sentiment, his all too short life cannot fail, his friends believe, to afford some inspiration to others in the future to whom the challenge of fate and of duty may come hand in hand.

In the very limitation of his career, in the very fact that his supreme decision robbed him of the time in which to do all the other brave deeds and to pursue all the other useful purposes of which he was capable, some young men yet to live may find a light cast upon their way. They may see how tragedy when illumined by high principle can glorify thoughts that had hardly taken form and works only begun in outline. The lesson Mills taught, all unconsciously—for it never occurred to him that he was doing anything unusually fine; the way of duty, especially of public duty was to him the obvious, the only way—the lesson of his life is that there is a success higher than success itself and a recompense more to be prized than prosperity or happiness.

How he reached this higher achievement and earned this better reward, it is the purpose of the succeeding pages to show. They will present him to the reader as he was. In many of them he will speak for himself, especially in his letters after he entered the army. The outline of his family history and the remembrances of associates of



his early life and comrades of his years of work in the newspaper field will show how he came to be what he was, clear-eyed, right-minded and strong-hearted, full of the enjoyment of life and eager for its prizes but willing to give up all for an ideal.

It will be seen that he fully understood the mortal risk that he incurred when he chose active service in the field. There is a final letter in which, as one might say, he seems to feel the great shadow already falling upon him. But he faced the danger cheerfully, even gaily, and his last word is a challenge to the hearts most in unison with his own to share his exaltation because he had done the one greatest thing a man can do and shared in the sublimest impulse that has thrilled the civilized world in a hundred years.

There was a blending of strains in Quincy Sharpe Mills which could not fail to produce a character compacted of strength and human sympathy. Through the family history there rings a note of sturdy romance. The record is in effect the history of the Old North State. From the wild days of settlement down the patriarchal years of slavery, through the desperate strain of civil war and in the cheerless twilight of reconstruction, the Millses and the Sharpes were always vivid figures in the life of their day.

The Mills family came to America from England at a very early period, and, long before the Revolution, had established a homestead, Mills's Point, on Chaptico Bay, four miles from the town of Chaptico, Maryland. Unfortunately the exact date of the migration and the founding of the house cannot be given. The family records, brought to North Carolina by Quincy's great-great-grandfather Charles Nathaniel Mills—of whom more hereafter—and all the early correspondence between the Carolinian and Maryland branches of the family were



destroyed by fire. But the house was built somewhere between 1620 and 1660. It is still in existence and is owned by a distant relative. The locality, which is the western part of St. Mary County, itself the most southern promontory of the state, lying between the Potomac and the Patuxent rivers, gives ample evidence in place names of the prevalence of the Millses. Near Mills's Point are Mills's End and Mills's Run—also Cook's Hope—all homes belonging to the family and some ten miles south of Chaptico is Millstown, a considerable village.

Practically all the settlers in this region were English Episcopalians of High Church tendencies. They were large slave owners, and planters on an extensive scale. They developed and maintained that type of patriarchal aristocracy which was so characteristic of the entire South before the Civil War. Mills's Point was only forty miles distant from Mount Vernon and there was an acquaintance between the owners which was cultivated by frequent exchange of visits.

The War of the Revolution found Mills's Point in the possession of Quincy's great-great-grandfather, John Mills, through whose wife, Elizabeth Rial, daughter of Admiral Rial of Marseilles, France, a strain of Gallic blood was introduced into the family. John Mills was the father of five sons, including John Mills, Jr., and Quincy's great-great-grandfather, Charles Nathaniel, who was born at Mills's Point on January 12, 1758. It was an incident of the Revolution in which these two figured that caused the removal of a branch of the family to North Carolina. The elder John Mills served as a captain under Washington in the Continental army. He was accompanied by his son John Mills, Jr., who was an ensign in the regiment with his father. Together they took part in the fighting around New York, and later John Mills, Jr., served with the rank of captain under General Nathaniel



Greene in the Will-o-the-Wisp game which that able soldier played with Cornwallis from January 24, 1781, a week after the battle of the Cowpens, to March 15th, the date of the fight at Guilford Court House. This curious speed contest between the opposed armies had its course in part through the section of North Carolina lying between the Catawba and Yadkin rivers.

The weather was very bad throughout that wild March. It rained almost continuously, flooding all the streams, a circumstance which was highly favorable to the patriotic commander's strategy though not calculated to charm the soldiers or to render the country attractive in their eyes. Prayerful thanks are still offered up by the people of that country for the fortunate downpour which helped in the ruin of the British army, but the men in the ranks and the company officers must often have said left-handed prayers as they squashed over the soggy roads while rivulets trickled down their backs. Yet, through the dismal conditions, one man saw the possibilities of the region. Captain John Mills observed the fertility of the soil and noted the abundance of game. The picture remained in his mind as of a good place to live in, a place to develop and to grow rich with.

When the war was over and the great prize of freedom won, and he returned to Mills's Point, he told his neighbors about it. He praised it so convincingly that the curiosity and the enterprise of his younger brother, Charles Nathaniel Mills, were awakened. Charles started an agitation among his friends which caused the migration in 1794 of ten or twelve families, including his own, to what is now the southern part of Iredell County, North Carolina. Charles Nathaniel Mills took with him his wife—also named Elizabeth Rial and his first cousin, whom he had married on January 17, 1779—several children and a number of slaves. Among the names of fami-



lies accompanying him are found Turner, Barber, Burrus, Alexander, Cook, Poston and Reeves. All these are extant in Iredell County, North Carolina, to-day, among the numerous descendants of the original settlers. An Episcopal clergyman, the Rev. Hatch Dent, a relative of the Mills and Turner families, went with the Marylanders to their new home and remained for a year.

Charles Nathaniel Mills and his son William, who was born in Maryland, November 7, 1784, revisited the old home in 1799. They were about to visit, also, their distinguished neighbor at Mount Vernon when the news of Washington's death was brought to them. This was the last recorded pilgrimage of the North Carolina branch to the original Mills settlement. The first John Mills had died shortly before and Charles Nathaniel took back to Iredell County several slaves as his share of the inheritance. The party of migrants which went over from Maryland to the hilly section of western North Carolina brought a new element into the population of the region. They were all faithful Church of England communicants and they were the first settlers of that persuasion to penetrate so far west, although there was already a considerable population. It would seem that they must have regarded themselves as an oasis of orthodoxy in a waste of non-conformity, for all around and about them to the east, west, north and south, stretching far down into South Carolina, there was a numerous settlement of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. Charles Nathaniel Mills, the leading spirit of the expedition, was, as has been indicated, the great-great-grandfather of Quincy Sharpe Mills. From among the Scotch-Irish population living all about came the latter's ancestors on his mother's side.

It is unnecessary here to tell in any detail the story of the Scotch-Irish immigration to America or to descant upon the type of men and women who took part in it.



Only so much need be said as will illustrate the influence of the strain upon the character and temperament of their descendant who is here commemorated. Very full notes on the family history have been furnished by Quincy Mills's mother, Mrs. Nannie Sharpe Mills, and the matter which follows is derived from these in combination with other sources.

The Sharpe family to which she belonged departed from the north of Ireland among the thousands of refugees who came to America in the early part of the eighteenth century in search of liberty of conscience, freedom from oppressive taxation and release from restriction of their industry. The tradition of the Sharpes down to the present day is that they, Scotch Covenanters, were twice driven from their homes by religious persecution. The first time, they moved from Ayrshire, Scotland, to Ulster on that account. Again, in 1704, an Act of Parliament required all public officials in Ireland to take the Sacrament according to the rites of the Established Church. Presbyterian magistrates and other public servants were removed from office in the Ulster counties which had been "planted" with Scotch settlers. Presbyterians were disciplined for being married by their own ministers. Presbyterian schoolmasters were imprisoned and the doors of their houses of worship nailed up. The raising of cattle for the English markets was first suppressed and then the exportation of woolen goods, which had become a great Ulster interest.

The resulting emigration to America began in 1698, when, it is estimated 200,000 people came over. By the time of the Revolution the Scotch-Irish settlers numbered in the neighborhood of 400,000. Many states received their quota, but the group that interests us here came in early in the seventeen-hundreds. Large numbers who refused to take the test oath imposed in 1704 landed at



New Castle, Delaware, then a part of Pennsylvania. While the bulk of the later immigrants went westward, this earlier group passed into Maryland and formed a fringe of settlement along the eastern coast of Chesapeake Bay which came to be known as "The Cradle of American Presbyterianism." The religious toleration of Lord Baltimore, the Catholic governor, attracted these refugees. Only later when a more bigoted régime set in did they join their brethren in the southward and westward movement.

Among these early comers was Thomas Sharp, first of the name in the American line. He arrived some years prior to 1718, but the exact date is unknown. No list of the incomers was kept until 1724; in fact no accurate record was ever made. He was among those who, having first choice, took up the desirable lands near the head of Chesapeake Bay. He was the great-great-great-grandfather of Quincy Sharpe Mills on his mother's side. His will which is dated January 9, 1747, describes him as "of Cecil County in the province of Maryland, Yeoman." It disposes of what must have been a goodly estate at that time. One third of all his movable estate is left to his wife, Isabella, absolutely, with a life interest in one third of his real estate. Sums ranging from sixty to twenty pounds, and totaling three hundred pounds, go to his five sons, two daughters and two sons-in-law. There must, in view of the bequest to the widow, have been a substantial residual estate, but no specific disposal is made of it.

Thomas Sharp, Sr., must have been a highly successful yeoman and colonist. His plantation, "Sharp's Industry," embraced 640 acres of land near Fair Hill, Cecil County, Maryland; it was in the section where the boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland was in bitter dispute until the Mason and Dixon line was established in 1767. He built on his land a large dwelling of stone which remained in existence until a few years ago. There is extant



sufficient evidence of his prominence in the community. There being need of a new Presbyterian church in or near Cecil County in 1720, the preliminary steps were taken toward the organization of the Rock Church, one of the landmarks of Colonial piety. Sharp was active in the founding of it. A list of Elders given in the history of the congregation by the Reverend J. H. Johns, published in 1872, shows that he was chosen Commissioner June 28, 1720, and later an Elder. The first home of the church, a log building, was at the Old Stone Graveyard near Lewisville, Pennsylvania. The second church, of stone, erected in 1741, was at Sharp's Graveyard near Fair Hill. The graveyard was a tract of land donated by the Elder about the time of the founding of the church.

Thomas Sharp died in 1749. The successor to his honors and the bulk of his estate was Thomas Sharp, Jr., who was an Elder of the Rock Church for more than thirty years. His will, made in October 1785, like his father's, distributes a healthy estate in land, cash and slaves among his progeny. He was twice married and had thirteen children, twelve of whom survived him. He died November 11, 1785, and lies buried in Sharp's Graveyard. The inscription on his tombstone is still plainly visible. His eldest son, William, was the first of the family to settle in North Carolina; his will shows that four other sons were also living in that state at the time of his death. Four of these, William, Joseph, James and John, founded homes in Iredell County and all were Revolutionary soldiers, Joseph serving through the struggle with the rank of captain. Amos, the second son of Thomas, Jr., and Mary McFerren, his second wife, seems to have held a high place in his esteem. He makes special provision for the boy to remain at school for the purpose of securing a liberal education. Amos was the great-grandfather of Quincy Sharpe Mills.

William, the eldest son and Quincy's great-grand-uncle,



is spoken of in Wheeler's *History of North Carolina* as "a distinguished patriot of the Revolution who early threw into that dangerous and dubious conflict, 'his life, his fortune and his sacred honor.' He was a member from Rowan County of two state congresses in 1775, and again in 1776 when the State Constitution was framed." He served as aide-de-camp to General Rutherford in 1776 in the campaign against the Cherokee Indians; and Quincy's great-great-grandfather, William McKee, was also a member of this expedition. William Sharpe became a member of the Continental Congress in 1779 and served until 1782. He died in 1818, leaving twelve children. Nothing in his career was more noteworthy than his letter to Governor Alexander Martin of North Carolina, by which, under date of Salem, November 26, 1781, he retired into private life. This is what he wrote:

I beg leave through your excellency to acquaint the legislature with the lively sense I entertain of the honor which they have been pleased to confer by their electing me three successive years to be one of their representatives in Congress.

Such repeated instances of the confidence of my country is very flattering and demands my unfeigned thanks. Conscious of my own inability, it was with great reluctance and with great diffidence that I engaged in the arduous task. I take the liberty to assure that honorable assembly that although I have not executed the trust reposed in me according to my wishes, yet I have done it to the utmost of my abilities. If I have at any time erred, I trust the candor of my country will ascribe it to the true cause, and not to any defection of my heart.

The obligations I am under to my numerous family, the deranged condition of my estate, which four years ago was very moderate and now much diminished by my long application to public business, are among the many reasons which induce me to resign my seat in Congress. At the first period of this



great Revolution I took an active part. I have now seen, and, as far as in my power, assisted my country through her greatest struggle, and her most critical situation. The prospect of Independence, peace and happiness to our great republic brightens every day; therefore, none can imagine that I have taken this step and retired to private life from any unworthy motive.

Amos Sharpe, born in 1769 and therefore too young to aid in the struggle for independence, joined his four brothers in Iredell County after the Revolution. There, in 1797, he married Mary Andrew, only child of Hugh and Rebecca Blair Andrew. In two important respects he followed the example of his Maryland forefathers—he became the father of a large family, eight sons and two daughters, and he was for years an Elder in the Presbyterian church. He was not unmindful of his military duty, for he served as major in the home guard of his section. In the early days this organization was of vital importance in the defence of the frontiers. He died at his home, not many miles from Statesville, on March 9, 1837. The youngest of his ten children, Leander Quincy Sharpe, born in 1816, was the grandfather of Quincy Sharpe Mills.

Hugh Andrew, born in 1754, was first an Orange County colonist. He there joined in the "Regulator" uprising against unjust taxation by Governor Tryon, and took part in May, 1771, in the battle of Alamance, which might really be termed the first armed clash of the Revolution. Many of the Regulators lost their lives in this unsuccessful stand against oppression, and the survivors escaped to the frontier to elude Tryon's vengeance. Andrew, in company with one of the Alamance leaders, James Hunter, called the "General" of the Regulators, went to Iredell, then part of Rowan County. Hunter, a man of means, influence and ability, had been outlawed for his activities, and after the Alamance affair a reward of a thousand



pounds and a thousand acres of land was offered for his delivery, "dead or alive." He was never taken, however, and died forty-four years later as a result of over-exertion in celebrating Jackson's victory over the British at New Orleans.<sup>1</sup> During the early part of the Revolution, Andrew served one campaign with Captain Hugh Hall. He was then, with Hunter, James Young and four associates, sent to Young's Fort to manufacture gunpowder for the army. This was a particularly dangerous assignment, for the Tories made every effort to destroy the fort and the men engaged in the essential task. Afterwards, Andrew returned to active service and fought in the battle of Cowpens. From this field he brought away a souvenir in the shape of an English gun barrel which was fashioned into a poker for the six-foot fireplace of the hall of his home. Hugh Andrew was as Scotch in character as in name; he was strong-willed, grimly humorous, a firm friend, a bitter foe, a faithful member of the Presbyterian church and actively interested in the educational advancement of his community. His long and useful life ended on his plantation north of Statesville on July 6, 1846, in his ninety-second year.

The group of Scotch-Irish immigrants to which Hugh Andrew belonged came to America some years after the arrival of the Sharps. The first comers having occupied the available lands near the coast, the succeeding waves, including the McKees, McKnights, Blairs, Andrews, Simontons, McHenrys, Caldwelles and Waddells, all families whose blood was blended in Quincy Mills's mother, had to go further west into Pennsylvania for homes. As their numbers grew, they spread farther and farther, passing southward along the valley of Virginia to Piedmont

<sup>1</sup> See *The Life and Times of James Hunter*, an address delivered by Major J. M. Morehead on July 3, 1897, at the Guilford Battleground Annual Celebration.



North Carolina, and on into South Carolina and Georgia. First they settled in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, then they spread into Rowan and Iredell, carrying their racial strength, their religious bent and their enthusiasm for freedom with them. Among their number was William McKee, great-grandfather of Mrs. Mills, who joined kindred and friends in what is now Iredell County but was then still, and for long years after, the western frontier of the state.

The McKees, Ulster Scots from the County Down, left Ireland for America about 1735. They were staunch Presbyterians, and descendants of one of the defenders of Londonderry who had "acquitted himself with great gallantry and suffered patiently the horrors of that awful siege." The McKees established themselves in Lancaster County Pennsylvania, and two of the family took part in the ill-fated Braddock expedition of 1755. Later, three of the pioneer McKee brothers, William, Robert and John, removed to the Valley of Virginia where they prospered greatly. Another brother, James McKee, great-great-grandfather of Mrs. Mills, remained permanently in Lancaster, bought land there and also acquired property in the Tuscarora Settlement in western Pennsylvania and in North Carolina. At his death his son Robert inherited the Lancaster estate; another son, John, received the Tuscarora land, and his widow, Margaret McKee, with her daughters, sons-in-law and young son William went down to the North Carolina plantation, the deed to which is dated in 1752. Three years after this date, in 1755, and slightly more than two miles to the west of the McKee land, Fort Dobbs was built as a border defence against the Indians.

Meanwhile another wave of Scotch-Irish colonization had rolled in by way of Charleston, South Carolina, and one stream from it had turned westward and northward to



the frontier in this same Iredell region, where its people mingled with their brethren, the pioneers from Pennsylvania and Maryland. Naturally, any line of cleavage speedily disappeared. All were of one race, one creed and one type. Presently all the colonists were so blended by intermarriages that kinship is almost universal among their descendants.

“For instance,” Mrs. Mills writes, “in the little town of Statesville, in all of Iredell and in parts of the surrounding counties, we are related to most of the original families. The dangerous North Carolina coast prevented the entrance of immigration which would have diluted the Scotch-Irish strain and this inland colony has remained unaltered in character. To-day, North Carolinians insist that they are the real Americans. In support of this claim, it is worth mentioning that when the United States entered the Great War in 1917, and every county was required to list all enemy aliens within its boundaries, not one was found in Iredell and indeed hardly any in the State.”

Mrs. Mills draws attention to a tribute to North Carolina by Senator John Sharp Williams—then Representative—in the opening of a political speech which he made at Statesville, the county seat of Iredell, on October 13, 1906, as illustrative of the spirit of the state and its people, which spirit was one of the great impelling forces with which we have to deal in this book. Senator Williams said:

You had to teach the doctrine in Massachusetts, in Virginia, in South Carolina and other parts of the Union that no class of men could be born booted and spurred to ride over their fellow men; but it never had to be taught in North Carolina, as you always knew it. Before the Revolution, and during the Revolution and after the Revolution, the Old North State has been by long odds the most democratic in its life and habits—and I



am not using the phrase in a partisan sense—of any State in the Union.

“This,” Mrs. Mills comments, “sounds rather in the spread-eagle vein, but anyone who is familiar with the history of the State must recognize the essential truth of it. The democratic spirit was due partly to the character of the people and partly to the fact that all were of the same stock and on the same level socially and financially.”

It is anticipating the course of the narrative by many years, but at this point Quincy Mills may best be introduced in his own person or rather through his own pen. At the time of Senator Williams’s Statesville speech, he was editor-in-chief of the *Tar Heel*, the weekly newspaper published by the students of the University of North Carolina. He published in the issue of October 25, 1906, an editorial upon the speech, and his journalistic instinct is displayed on this early occasion in the point which he took up for comment. Here is the article in full:

Hon. John Sharp Williams, in his recent speech at Statesville, made one statement which we feel compelled to challenge. In referring to the University of Virginia he paid her a tribute as being the first state university to open her doors in the new world. While we cherish only the most sincere good will towards the University of Virginia, to whom we are closely allied by the bonds of name and of purpose, we believe that honor should be paid to whom honor is due. It is for that reason, therefore, that we feel called upon to state that the doors of the University of North Carolina were opened thirty years before those of the University of Virginia. On October 12, 1792, the grounds of the University were chosen. Not a fortnight ago, we celebrated the anniversary of this event. The venerable Davie poplar is standing still as a monument to Col. Davie and his associates. In 1793, work was begun on the Old East building and on the laying off of the campus, and,



in 1795, the University opened her doors for the first time to students. In 1825 the University of Virginia followed suit.

Not only did the University precede her Virginia sister. She was preceded by only one similar institution in America, the University of Pennsylvania, which sprang into existence one year earlier. By this narrow margin did the University of North Carolina escape becoming the pioneer of all American state universities. As it is, she was practically so in spirit, as standing for democracy and education, two principles which were to prove fundamental in the development of our nation, in the recognition of which the colleges of a continent have followed her lead.

It is worth mention that if the Mississippi orator met all his family connections in Statesville and Iredell County, his right hand must have been in sad condition from multiplied shakings. The Sharpe connection, of which his name is the evidence, is very numerous in that region.

It will be noted that prior to this digression we had brought into close neighborhood and association the two main lines of Quincy Mills's ancestry. We found that they were settlers of rival but not unfriendly tendencies in Iredell County. We must still pursue for a while the story of the Scotch-Irish stock which constituted the maternal side. "The Scotch-Irish in America," Mrs. Mills remarks in her notes, "have been too busy making history to write it." However, they are not without their chroniclers, whether at large or in the North Carolina field. In the *North Carolina Booklet* for March, 1905, we find a spirited account of them written by the Rev. A. J. McKelway. which affords many of the details herein presented.

The migrants from Pennsylvania, including William McKee, were already experienced frontiersmen. They recognized and settled on the best lands and speedily established cultivation. The country combined tracts



of both forest and prairie. Deer and buffalo were plenty; so were bears and there were not a few panthers. The Indians were friendly, as a rule, but, naturally, precautions had to be taken against their instability of temper. The settlers came with their wives and children and goods and chattels loaded on great wains—the famous prairie schooners. They lived the life and endured the hardships of pioneerdom, gradually working their way from privation by courage and industry to comfort and prosperity, ultimately to refinement and wealth. The versatility of the early settlers, men and women alike, was as remarkable as their thrift and perseverance. Social and economic organization soon replaced the primitive conditions of the frontier.

Law and order were speedily enforced by regular machinery; the genius of the people ran strongly in that direction. Yet something of their combative instincts was at work, too, for an annual military muster was ordained and brought the men of the community together at the chief centres, the county towns, as quickly as these were erected. The men were skillful with the rifle, and rifles were manufactured at High Shoals at an early period, Mr. McKelway tells us. One of these weapons with a long barrel, and stock reaching to its muzzle, was presented, it seems, to General Washington, and was highly prized by him.

Of course the church was a primary care; it was the fundamental institution of the colony, and although the men listened to sermons with their rifles across their knees this was no bar to faithful church attendance by the pioneers, or to long sermons by their ministers. One of Mills's maternal ancestors, the Reverend James McKnight, was a flagrant offender in the matter of long sermons. Next in importance to the church came the school. In 1755, Governor Dobbs visited the then new county of Rowan,



established in 1753 and including in its area the larger part of western North Carolina and Tennessee. He wrote that "some Irish Protestants had settled together with families of eight or ten children each and had a school teacher of their own." The great influx of Scotch-Irish and of Scotch Highlanders into North Carolina was largely due to the fact that for more than thirty years, from 1734 to 1765, the three chief executives of the state, Gabriel Johnston, a Scotchman, and Colonel Matthew Rowan and Major Arthur Dobbs, Ulster Scots, had used every inducement in their power to attract their countrymen. While on this visit to the new county Governor Dobbs selected the site for a fort for the protection of the region and commissioned Captain Hugh Waddell to erect it. This stronghold, named Fort Dobbs for the Governor, was long a tower of refuge from the frequent attacks of the red men; and there in 1760 its builder, Waddell, with forty soldiers and many refugees, was besieged by two parties of Indians.

The church building, wherever located, usually became the nucleus of a town. Statesville, for example, is built around the site of the first church founded in that section of Iredell County, then, and until 1788, a part of Rowan. The minister was often also the teacher of his community. The Reverend James Hall, D.D., a Princeton man—at this time the college men of Presbyterian faith were almost exclusively alumni of this university—was Iredell's first teacher of importance. In addition to his ministerial labors he established Science Hall and Clio Nursery, schools of great usefulness. When the Revolution came Dr. Hall became the military as well as the spiritual leader, taking command as captain of a company of the men of his congregation.

The Scotch-Irish of North Carolina were always to the fore in times of need. They had their share in the French and Indian War. As the conditions developed which led



to the Revolution, the entire state was awake. County committees were organized, and, in particular the Scotch-Irish population reached a keen state of mental preparedness for the coming struggle. It is impossible to avoid noticing the parallel between the causes which had driven these people from their homes in Ulster to cross the ocean and those which were now operating to effect an even more radical severance of ties. Besides the general causes of unrest, affecting all the thirteen colonies alike, the North Carolina Presbyterians had special grievances.

The name of Captain Hugh McKnight, a great-great-great-grandfather on the maternal side of Quincy Sharpe Mills's ancestry, was signed in 1766 to a "Petition of His Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, inhabitants of Rowan County, to His Excellency, Josiah Martin," asking that Presbyterian ministers might be permitted to perform the "Marriage Ceremony for those of their own congregation." A long list of Osbornes, Brevards, Davidsons and other well-known names is also subjoined. This Captain Hugh McKnight had received a large grant of land in Rowan County bordering on Mecklenburg. According to the North Carolina Colonial Records, volume 22, he served in the French and Indian War in 1759 and 1760.

In addition to the marriage grievance, when they desired to found a university, the Queen's College, the King refused a charter on the specific ground of their religion. It is not astonishing that when, on May 19, 1775, the news of the skirmish at Lexington reached a joint military muster and county committee meeting which was being held at Charlotte, the assemblage was fired by the startling intelligence. The next day, May 20, is annually celebrated in Charlotte as the anniversary of that much controverted Mecklenburg Declaration which local tradition fondly holds to have anticipated the more famous one of Philadelphia in 1776. The spirit of the entire state flamed high



and the general cry became, "The cause of Boston is the cause of all." The Mecklenburg Resolves which were adopted on May 31, as is well known, set forth that the joint address of the two Houses of the British Parliament to the King had virtually "annulled and vacated all civil and military commissions granted by the Crown and suspended the constitutions of the Colonies." Mecklenburg County is the next-door neighbor of Iredell to the south and its people were of the same stock, with the same ideals. The two were settled by the same wave of migration, and a great part of this was from the Maryland "Cradle of Presbyterianism."

At the beginning of the Revolution, the Scotch-Irish, it is estimated, numbered about 400,000 souls, one-sixth or, if negro slaves be excluded, one-fourth of the entire population of the thirteen insurgent colonies. In the back, or inland, counties of North Carolina, as of Pennsylvania and Virginia, they were altogether the preponderating element. They were to a man on the side of the colonies and of independence; they put forward all the strength that was in them and they exercised a mighty influence. Everyone of old descent in the western counties to-day has ancestors who fought in the Continental armies. Four of Mills's Revolutionary forbears have already been mentioned: the two captains, John Mills, Sr., and John Mills, Jr., on the paternal side and two great-great-grandfathers, Hugh Andrew and William McKee, of his mother's family. Besides these there were many other Revolutionary soldiers of various degrees of kinship in both lines of his ancestry. William McKee served first (as has been noted elsewhere) in the campaign under General Rutherford against the Cherokees in the summer of 1776. In the spring of that year this tribe of Indians, incited by the British, descended from the mountains in a succession of murderous forays, and by the 28th of June two hundred



western settlers had been slain. General Griffith Rutherford, military commander of the district, collected two thousand four hundred men of the militia under his command, and by a swift movement into the Indian country surprised the savages and completely destroyed their power to harass the frontier. The Reverend James Hall of Iredell was Chaplain of the expedition, and in a diary kept by Captain Charles Polk, who was at the head of one of the companies, is this entry: "On September 15, 1776, Mr. Hall preached a sermon." This was probably the first religious service ever held in these wild mountain valleys. Rutherford's force started on its march for the trackless mountains on July 19, and after the accomplishment of their arduous task the men were disbanded at Salisbury on October 3. Afterwards, McKee served under General Davidson and Colonel Locke, and refused to accept any compensation for his military service. His country needed the money more than he did, he declared. It was his belief that a man should no more accept pay for defending his country than for protecting his family. This disinterested attitude has remained a tradition of fruitful pride among his descendants. While William McKee was soldiering with the North Carolinians his older brother, Robert, served as captain of a Pennsylvania company, and a first cousin, Colonel William McKee, of Rockbridge County, Virginia, marched with the Old Dominion troops from Point Pleasant to the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

The North Carolina patriot soldiers appeared in many parts of the country where hard fighting was going on. They proved their mettle under Washington at Monmouth, Brandywine and Germantown; with him they suffered at Valley Forge; to them Wayne assigned the most difficult task in the storming of Stony Point. In their own region they were prominent at Moore's Creek



where they defeated the Highland Scotch Tories by matching their rifles against the broadsword. They had a share in the victories of Ramsour's Mill and Colson's Farm, and in the fiery resistance to the British occupation of Charlotte in Mecklenburg County which led Cornwallis to call the town the "Hornet's Nest." The nickname was adopted by the people with great pride, and from that day to this Charlotte has always had a military company called the Hornet's Nest Riflemen. Of such rich color is the local history and tradition of the countryside. The Scotch-Irish volunteers also made up a majority of the Colonial troops at King's Mountain, where some thirteen hundred of them annihilated a British force of over a thousand. By stubbornly opposing Cornwallis's advance they turned what he expected to make a conquering march across the Carolinas and Virginia into a hasty retreat to Wilmington, and under General Greene they took part in the battles of Guilford Court House and Eutaw Springs.

After the war, these men went quietly back to their farms or their workshops and turned their energies to improving their own and their children's circumstances and building up the country. William McKee prospered. At his death on February 17, 1820, he left to his eight children and his wife, Mary McHenry McKee, large holdings of land and other property. His son, John Henry McKee, born March 21, 1784, great-grandfather of Quincy Mills, inherited from him the homestead near Statesville. This original McKee plantation still remains in the family. It is now the property of John McKee Sharpe, a first cousin once removed, as his Irish forbears would have described the relationship, of Quincy Mills, that is to say, a first cousin of Mills's mother.

John Henry McKee, the second proprietor, according to tradition, was an unusually silent man, of even temper and level head. He had strong business ability and added to



his inheritance. On October 18, 1821, he married his first cousin, Mary McKnight, who died in 1836, leaving two daughters, Mary and Sarah. Mary, the eldest, was the grandmother of Quincy Mills. John McKee's was a peaceful life, although two of our six major wars fell within his time, the struggle of 1812-15 and the Mexican adventure. He was Colonel of a home regiment during the former war, but North Carolina troops had small part in either conflict. None went to the front in the second war with England and but one regiment of volunteers was sent to Mexico, only two companies of which were actually engaged in battle.

In John McKee's period, down to the Civil War, the North Carolina plantations raised vast quantities of food-stuffs, but, in addition, had very notable industrial interests. There was an extensive system of home manufacturing of wool, cotton and leather. Small quantities of silk, even, were grown on some plantations and spun and woven on the spot; but this was not usual. On each plantation there were spinning houses, loom houses and sewing houses, still houses, shoeshops and blacksmith's shops. All were kept humming with work. Everything actually needed for home consumption was produced—only luxuries were imported—and there was a large surplus for shipment. This was sent by wagon train mostly to Charleston, S. C., where it was sold, and comforts and luxuries bought with the proceeds were carted back to the far inland homes.

The region remained isolated to a considerable extent; but a high degree of intelligence and education prevailed among the white population. Interest in national affairs and in the current history of the world was general and keen. "My mother has told me," Mrs. Mills writes, "that one of her earliest recollections (she was born on Christmas day, 1823, and lived until February 22, 1904) was of frequent gatherings of the men from homes near and



far who came to discuss politics and the news of the day. The social side of life thus became strongly developed. It consisted of a constant round of visits among relations and friends spread out over the land."

Slavery had been introduced in the eighteenth century. It had, in fact, been forced upon the people by the English government against their will. It had become, however, a part of the machinery of life; it seemed essential to the plantation owners and everyone was reconciled to it. Residents of the section to-day hold as a truth established by tradition that the treatment of the slaves was better in North Carolina than in any other part of the South. "They were, of course, well cared for physically as valuable property," Mrs. Mills points out, "but, in addition, their owners gave earnest thought to their own responsibility for the moral condition of these dependents not long removed from savagery. One of my mother's duties as a young woman was to assist in the religious instruction of the negroes, and from her I learned that there was but one master of all those known to her who was cruel to his slaves. In fact, grandfather McKee, along with many other Southerners, disapproved of slavery on principle, and the question might have been settled in a short time had not the war been precipitated."

With the Civil War period—still following the Scotch-Irish or maternal line of ancestry—Quincy Mills's grandparents, Leander Quincy Sharpe and Mary Emmeline McKee, married on March 19, 1845, and both of Iredell County, now step into this narrative. In his mother's words, "he always seemed to be largely a blend of these two fine natures." He had a remarkable directness of mind, a power of going straight to the kernel of a question. This power, Mrs. Mills believes, he derived especially from her mother, who exhibited the same trait.



"I have a strong feeling of reverence for my mother, Mary McKee," writes Mrs. Mills, "for the brave way in which she met her many sorrows and misfortunes. Her early life was smooth and pleasant, free from any trouble or anxiety. Then, in February, 1866, she was left a widow, literally without money, and with three children to support and educate. She had land in abundance; everyone had; but no money to pay the taxes on it.

"Our home was surrounded by a grove several acres in extent, and one of the most vivid of my memories is that of being carried out at night by my nurse to see campfires shining among the trees and groups of soldiers gathered about them. They were a part of the force of General Stoneman whose army raided our portion of the State after Lee's surrender in April, 1865. Everything of value had been hidden before their arrival, but few of these hiding places escaped their vigilance; they carried off all jewelry and silverware found; even the silk dresses (the few left after four years of war) of the women were taken. Of the foodstuffs searched out from their concealment, from preserves to meat and grain, the soldiers took what they could use and destroyed the remainder. The most serious loss was that of all stock from the plantations. The farm animals had been driven back into the loneliest, least accessible places in the hope of saving them from the raiders. In nine cases out of ten they were found and taken off by the soldiers; my father and grandfather McKee lost their all in this line.

"When Stoneman's army withdrew, many of the young negro men left with it; not a few of the black husbands and fathers, also, abandoned their families to follow the soldiers, and the greater number of these adventurers never returned. My father shared with his remaining darkies the scanty store of grain and meat that had not been found in the repeated searches of the home and surrounding



premises; then they, too, departed to seek new living quarters. They could not believe their freedom real until they had proved it by moving, if only from one farm to the next. There was no money to pay these freedmen wages, therefore the landowners parceled out their plantations into small tracts which were farmed by the negroes 'on shares,' and everybody went to work with a will to make the best of a seemingly hopeless situation.

"Northerners can never comprehend the poverty, the helplessness of the South in the years following the close of the War. Entirely an agricultural country, it was left without farm animals to work the land, without grain to seed it, without implements to till it, without appliances or supplies of any kind. The poverty was hard, but the change in the social life was even more desolating. The homes that had been centres of enjoyment and happiness were silent and gloomy. Nearly all mourned the loss of sons in battle; all suffered from extreme privation; over all hung like a pall the terror of negro domination.

"My mother struggled along through these and other misfortunes. We did not suffer any actual hunger though many did. But schools from the University down were broken up and the education of my generation was in many cases gathered from home instruction and from reading—if, indeed, there was leisure or inclination to read in that distracted time. The lack of mental food was worse than the lack of a liberal living. We were mentally and temperamentally starved. Sidney Lanier put it well when he wrote: 'We didn't live; we just didn't die.'

"My childhood recollections throw light upon a period and phase of American life that is remote and incomprehensible to people of the present day. Our home during that time, situated on the eastern edge of the county seat, the little town of Statesville, would nowadays be considered a small farm. The negro quarters and outbuildings in



addition to the home made quite a community, and to the south about a mile away was what we called 'the little plantation' which was cultivated by negro laborers sent out from the town place. To the north, ten miles away, was 'the river plantation' managed by an overseer who kept there a sufficient number of slaves to carry on the work of a large and productive farm. Most of the Statesville people of that day were like ourselves owners of land outside the town, therefore the whole population was really dependent upon the country.

"A child's memories begin with pictures of its surroundings which are not understood at the time, but are interpreted afterwards by the knowledge and experience gained from the passing years. It is strange how numerous and distinct are the negro portraits that have remained permanently engraved upon my mind. Among these is that of our Mammy Leah who possessed all the outward marks of the traditional southern mammy. She was rotund, fond of children and beamingly good-natured, but she did not measure up to the accepted standard of loyalty to her 'white folks.' Unfortunately she could not distinguish between mine and thine. Mammy failed to assimilate her share of the moral instruction dealt out to the McKee and Sharpe darkies, for she did not hesitate to appropriate whatever appealed to her fancy from the food, clothing and trinkets of her master's house. My mother admonished and warned to no effect, so finally the decree of banishment to the river plantation fell upon our ebony friend; and, another instance of the innocent suffering along with the guilty, her husband, Uncle Jesse, shared her punishment. This was not compulsory; the choice was given him of going or staying, and his reply was, 'I go with Leah.' It was a sore inconvenience, and a financial loss as well, to give up his services in town, for he was an expert shoemaker and repairer and when not busy with



home work was earning money by making footwear for the slaves of the townspeople about us. But my father and mother were too humane to break family ties, therefore Uncle Jesse accompanied his wife into an exile as hateful to the excitement-loving, social negro race as was Siberia to Russia's political offenders. There was no ill-treatment up on the river, for the overseer there was a just and patient man, but the loneliness of the widely separated plantations was unendurable after town life.

"I, at that time quite a small child, knew nothing of the impending tragedy and its cause, but one morning sounds of distress in the negro quarter drew me out of the house to the yard to find Mammy Leah and Uncle Jesse seated on chairs in a big farm wagon, she with her apron thrown over her head and her lamentations ringing over the whole place. My sympathy was so aroused by her weeping that my wails were added to hers without any understanding on my part of what it was all about. Uncle Jesse, white-haired and with a fringe of white whiskers around his face in Uncle Ned style, sat perfectly quiet, his hands clasped on top of his staff. Thus Mammy passed out of our life forever, for she died not long thereafter. Uncle Jesse lived on for years, often coming to my mother for help after freedom came to him. Emancipation brought privation and suffering to the aged or helpless among the negroes unless they were looked after by their former owners, and such was the universal practice in our section. This old shoemaker was always serene and silent; the little he had to say was delivered in a fine, thin, high-pitched voice, the like of which I never heard from any other darky's throat. As a race they are remarkable for full, deep voices that fall musically upon the ear.

"William and Sam, brothers of about ten and twelve, and two small black limbs of Satan, reappear to my mind's eye as perpetually turning cartwheels on the grass in the



rear of our home for the entertainment of the white children and a crowd of their own dusky followers. The only work assigned to these two boys, so far as I ever knew, was the task of waving the beautiful peacock feather brushes, one at each end of the long dining table, at breakfast, dinner and supper. With them, to be still was to be sleepy, and they could never perform this arduous dining room duty without nodding and finally falling asleep; the peacock feathers would wave slowly and yet more slowly until at last the tips would descend upon the dishes. Then my father would turn to the black head nearest him and give it a rap with the carving knife handle that would bring the brothers both to the alert for a time. My food was really little pleasure to me those days, for I was all horrified expectation of those never failing nods and equally certain raps. Perhaps the boys drew lots as to which should take the post of danger next their master.

“The dearest of these dark portraits remaining in my mind is that of my nurse Caroline, a young woman of twenty-two or twenty-three with more gentle quietness and refinement in her nature than any other member of her race known to me except her mother, Elizabeth, who was the house seamstress. I was almost constantly with these two, and when older I realized that they had been selected as house servants because of their reliable qualities. My nurse, her mother, Uncle Jesse and my grandfather McKee’s cook, Isabella, always called Aunt Ibby, were of a different type from the other darkies. Their coloring, thin features and bearing were more Indianlike than African, and they possessed dignity and reserve. Aunt Ibby was a wonderfully fine cook, and the delicious food that was served from the kitchen of the old McKee homestead was famous far and near. The taste and odor of the waffles she made every morning for my grand-



father's breakfast have remained a delightful gastronomic memory.

"A pleasure Caroline and I shared together was watching my grown-up sister and her friends gathered around the piano in the parlor, and listening to their singing. My observations began in wartime, for I was born in 1859, but there seems to have been no lack of beaux in those merry crowds; the young men must have been soldiers home on furlough, for every man of fighting age was then in the Confederate army. Of course the war songs, *Maryland My Maryland*, *Dixie* and others were the prime favorites, though songs from the old operas were not neglected, and of these, *Hear Me*, *Norma*, thrilled us most.

"My mother knew the hardships of this old life that to a child appeared altogether happy and desirable. She was such a busy woman that she had to deny herself, to a large degree, the companionship of her children. Every woman at the head of a Southern household in those days had an overflowing measure of responsibility, but her duties were probably more exacting and numerous than those of any other wife and mother in our small town. This was due to the fact that my father's profession and his political activities kept him away from home much of the time, and in the years when he was a member of the State House or Senate he was absent during the sessions of the Legislature. In addition to the oversight of her five children and the home, always filled with visitors from the large circle of relatives and friends, the direction of the work on the nearby plantation fell upon her shoulders. But her hardest problem was the management of the negroes. I have heard her say, in speaking of the transition from too many servants to none at all, that she was emancipated along with her slaves. Her position was rendered more trying by an unusually sensitive conscience.



“My father, Leander Quincy Sharpe, for whom my boy was named, must have been one of the most lovable of men. I was little more than six years of age when he died in 1866, so my memories of him are vague. But wherever I went as a child or as a young woman people talked to me about my father, of his ready wit as a speaker, of his gayety, unfailing kindness and cheerfulness, of his universal popularity. His cheerfulness of spirit was wonderful in view of the fact that he was never strong and that he suffered severely for several years before his death. A part of his education was received at Davidson College, not far from Statesville, one of the first institutions of learning to be founded near us, at which, I may remark, President Wilson received two years of his college training. It has always had a large attendance from among the Presbyterian descendants of the Scotch-Irish in the South. After leaving college my father entered the law school of Richmond M. Pearson, afterwards Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court, at Richmond Hill, Yadkin County; when his law course was completed he entered upon the practice of his profession in Statesville, and he was successful from the first. He was a member of the State House of Representatives in 1856, 1864 and 1865, and of the State Senate from 1860 to 1862. A short time before his death he had been elected solicitor for the Iredell District which at that time included the entire western part of the State. He was opposed to secession and used every effort to prevent it. In *Reconstruction in North Carolina* by J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, of Columbia University, a work published in Raleigh, L. Q. Sharpe is mentioned on page 19 as one of a group who opposed the bill passed January 30, 1861, which provided for submitting to the people the question of calling a convention to consider Federal relations. He and his supporters, four in number, contested every step in the progress of the



measure and gave the secessionists infinite trouble. As a result of their determined fight against secession my father and his associates in the contest, when on the way to their homes at the close of the session, were almost mobbed at Salisbury, N. C., by a number of hot-headed advocates of the measure. This was the only evidence of public ill-will my father ever experienced, as his attractive personality made him a favorite with all parties.

“The people of North Carolina withdrew most reluctantly from ‘the Union of States that had been in such large part constructed by the heroism and wisdom of their own fathers.’ But having finally cast in her lot with the Confederacy the State supported with the last ounce of her strength the cause she was so slow to join. The records of the War Department at Washington show that North Carolina furnished more troops—one-fourth of the entire force raised by the Confederate government during the war came from our State—and lost more men in killed and wounded than any other Southern state. Her total contribution was 125,000 men. Again, as in the days of ’76, her dangerous seacoast played a part in history, for the Northern fleet found it impossible to seal her ports. Swift and daring blockade runners brought in from Nassau and Bermuda clothing and equipment not only for her own soldiers but for the troops of other states. But for this help the unequal struggle between the North and the South would have ended long before April, 1865.

“The best illustration of my father’s nature I can give is to tell this story of his devotion to one of his friends. While he was attending court at the county seat of an adjoining county, one of the other lawyers was stricken with smallpox. Such was the dread of the scourge at that time that the sick man was literally deserted—left alone in the hotel where he was stopping. My father went to him at once and took charge of the case until an immune



nurse could be procured. Then he went home and isolated himself with one servant; fortunately, however, there were no serious results from the risk so generously taken.

"He contracted typhoid fever in Raleigh while serving as a member of the Legislature in 1866, and returned to our home in Statesville to die of it there on February 13 of that year. Typhoid was until recent years a terrible affliction to the South. On February 26, thirteen days after my father's death, his eldest child, a young woman of nineteen, died of it, and in 1890 a younger sister, most beloved, contracted it in Richmond, Virginia, during an epidemic and succumbed. Quincy almost died of it some years later.

"Quincy inherited my father's cheerful nature and his ability to make friends. My mother and I long hoped that he might take up the study of the law, and so, as I might say, round out his grandfather's unfinished career. But Quincy had no gifts as a speaker, and realized the deficiency. Therefore he wisely determined to make his way with his pen. He intended, however, to enter politics, for it was his belief that political power, honestly gained and rightly used, was the one thing really worth while."

Mills would have been a potent influence for good in public life had he lived to enter it because he was at once intelligent and incorruptible. He would have advocated wise and honest policies and could not have been swerved from them by any selfish consideration. He had a very keen enjoyment of the good things of life, but they were of no moment to him as compared with cravings of the spirit.

In the account given above of the Scotch-Irish branch of his ancestry the origin of many of his most prominent traits of character may be found. They were clear headed, independent, industrious people; they had a faculty of concentration on an idea, an intensity in their make-up



which tended toward religious fervor, or even fanaticism. This inheritance in him ran rather to a spirit of public service and to patriotic enthusiasm. The same qualities which made them exiles because of sectarian oppression, and revolutionists and separatists in the days of the Revolution made him a fervent advocate of war with Germany and one of the first volunteers for active duty in the field. The addiction to work and thrift, the productive power of the North Carolina settlers, were perpetuated in his earnest and fruitful labor in his chosen field of journalism. Besides the inheritance of blood, the biological influence, there was the effect of local and family tradition upon the development of his mind and character. Of this influence his mother speaks with full knowledge and correct understanding.

"Southerners," writes Mrs. Mills, "live much more in the past than do the people, generally speaking, of the North. To them the war of the Revolution seems near and they reckon time by the Civil War; this or that happening was so many years before or after 'The War,' they still say. Like all old settlements, our community of Iredell County is rich in tradition and many are the stories that have come down to us from the early days.

"During Quincy's boyhood and during his college vacations, I sometimes called his attention to this store of historic and romantic tradition, which awaited some pen to give it permanent form. Had he lived, the time might have come when he would have turned to this fascinating task. But, of course, the work he had to do was more pressing and more important.

"The Scotch-Irish, of whom he was one-half the descendant, have been called the Puritans of the South; but our people possessed, as well as their rigid principles, a rich humor and wide tolerance quite foreign to the typical Puritan nature and training. While devotion to their



church was the rule, the number of men of our stock who could never tie themselves down narrowly to a creed was and is remarkably large. They could not love their Lord by 'rule and line,' though their lives bore testimony to their belief in Him."



## CHAPTER II

THE CIVIL WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH OF GLOOM—TONIC INFLUENCES OF  
AN EX-CONFEDERATE HOME—A PICTURESQUE BOY AND HIS QUAIN  
SURROUNDINGS—EVOLUTION OF AN IDEAL.

WE must now return to the fortunes of the Mills family which we left prosperous pioneers of English Episcopalian antecedents, flourishing in the midst of the Scotch-Irish Sharpes and McKees in the Statesville region of Iredell County and naturally living much the same life as their neighbors, socially and economically. Charles Nathaniel, the leader of the exodus from Maryland, lived until December 17, 1843, when he was nearly eighty-six years old. His wife Elizabeth Rial, who was born in 1763, survived him until August 22, 1854, when she died at ninety-one. Next in the line of Quincy Mills's ancestry was their son, William, born in Maryland, November 7, 1784, who has already been mentioned as accompanying his father on a visit to Mills's Point. He married Elizabeth Dearman on February 5, 1820 and lived to the age of eighty-seven years, dying August 26, 1871. His widow lived ten years longer, reaching the age of eighty-one.

In 1861, at the beginning of the Civil War, William Mills was living on his plantation a few miles south of Statesville. Like John Mills of the Revolutionary War, he was the father of five sons as well as four daughters—great ages and large families were the order of these days. All the sons served the Confederacy. Among them was Quincy's grandfather, Henry Mansfield Mills, who was



born April 11, 1831. His wife, Mary Dickson, whom he married in 1853 (November 3), died in 1859, leaving one son, Thomas Millard Mills, born September 1, 1856, who became the father of Quincy Sharpe Mills and who is still living. Henry Mills enlisted in one of the first military organizations formed in that region for service in the Civil War, Company C (part of the 4th North Carolina regiment of infantry) of Statesville, commanded by Captain Andrews. He did not go to the front, however; he was found physically disqualified, and sent home to serve in civil life. The Confederate Government appointed him tithing agent and postmaster at Granite Hill, Iredell Co., and he discharged the duties of these positions faithfully to the end of the conflict. His pardon for having served the Confederacy, a formidable looking document signed by Andrew Johnson, is in the possession of his children, and at this late day they are still given to explosions of wrath when they speak of it. Every man who served the Confederate Government officially received one of these pardons. One of Henry Mills's brothers, Quincy's grand-uncle, Dr. Richard Mills, was a surgeon in the Confederate army throughout the war. He was employed much of the time in the military hospitals around Richmond. Two other brothers, Frank and Harrison, were in Company B, second North Carolina regiment of cavalry, and saw active service in the four years' campaigns from 1861 to 1865. The fifth brother, James, also volunteered, but was assigned to duty at home as an expert in mill machinery.

The drain of the war and the collapse of the Confederacy brought financial ruin to the Mills family as to practically the entire South. Their old home, handed down from Nathaniel, the pioneer, passed out of their hands. All the brothers returned to Iredell County when the struggle was over, and Henry settled down on a small farm on the eastern edge of Statesville. He contracted a second marriage



with Miss Anna Robinson, and of this marriage five children were born. These were: Richard J. Mills, James Forney Mills, Mary Elizabeth Mills Cowan, Nannie Williams Mills and Hugh Mills. Mrs. Cowan and Miss Mills contribute reminiscences to this book. James Forney Mills, to anticipate a little, joined the army in the Spanish War as a member of the Iredell Blues, a historic military organization of Statesville incorporated in the First North Carolina Regiment. He was one of the first American soldiers to set foot on Cuban soil, and he made his campaign notable by a series of vivid letters, describing events and conditions, which were published in the Statesville *Landmark*.

To go back, the farm on which Henry Mansfield Mills made his home after the close of the Civil War was a picturesque spot in a rolling country of alternating woods and farm lands, which stretches far to the east and south of Statesville. We shall return to it presently, for it was one of the great influences in Quincy Mills's boyhood. There his grandfather, tired from the war that had raged around him, though his part was only that of a non-combatant, and depressed by the sorrows of reconstruction days, settled down into a quiet life which was prolonged to August 18, 1909, when he was in his seventy-ninth year. There grew up Thomas Millard Mills and his half brothers and sisters among the cramped and gloomy conditions and in the saddened atmosphere which pervaded the Southern States for almost a quarter of a century.

A vivid idea of the conditions of the time as they are preserved in memory by Nannie Sharpe, now Mrs. Mills, has already been given in her own words. While the young Mills was growing to manhood at his father's house, she was developing from girlhood into young womanhood under her widowed mother's care in the Statesville home of the Sharpes. The two young people—she was three



years the younger, having been born December 6, 1859—were of different racial descent, and, back of the war, held different traditions. But there was never anything like a feud between the two religious elements in North Carolina, once the curse of governmental persecution had been abolished by the Revolution. At any rate, difference in religion or antecedents has never been a serious obstacle to the mating of youth. It never was in North Carolina. It did not so operate in the Mills family. Therein there was a double blending. Thomas M. Mills became the husband of Nannie Sharpe, and his half sister, Mary Elizabeth Mills, took for her husband James Leonidas Cowan, a descendant of John Knox, but so unlike his ancestor in temperament as to afford friends and relations an ever amusing contrast with the grim Scottish reformer.

The young Mills couple were married in Statesville, on September 25, 1881. There Quincy was born on January 15, 1884, and there was his home for the first five years of his life. He was christened in Trinity Church, Statesville, and of the event his aunt, Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Mills Cowan, writes in a memoir, prepared for use in this book: "I remember his baptism as one of the most beautiful I ever witnessed, with the late afternoon sunshine slanting through the stained glass window and falling on his head. It seemed more than an earthly baptism."

We first get a real vision of the boy as a quaint and lovable little chap, delicate and reflective in one aspect, but full of animal spirits, love of contention and the joy of life at the same time. The boy was father to the man in his curious mixture of contradictory qualities, of controversy and amiability, of alert action and dreamy contemplation. He remained an only child, and the bonds of affection between him and his mother were strongly and closely knit. Here is a picture of him in this first phase:

"Quincy's interest in books," Mrs. Mills writes, "be-



gan by the time he could hold one in his hands. From then on to the time when he could read for himself, I was called upon to explain pictures and put in all my spare moments reading aloud for him—and what a delight it was to both of us!” The reading aloud did not cease with his ability to read for himself. We shall learn more of it presently; but of this earliest period of the opening of the child mind in contact with the mother’s, Mrs. Mills goes on: “I remember well one book, a natural history, which was for a long while his special favorite. I was required to tell the story of each picture over and over again and whenever we reached the picture of a herring which adorned one page, he would plant a fat finger on it and contradict me when I read out ‘Herring.’ ‘No,’ he would say, ‘it’s a fish!’ Our argument would go on until I tired out and surrendered, saying, ‘Well, have it your own way,’ and the game ended in a laugh and a romp.

“How this started, I do not remember, but we always used exactly the same words. It seems a small thing to tell, but it is remarkable that at this early age Quincy should have shown this whimsical trait of taking the opposite side and arguing for argument’s sake. The love of argument grew with his growth. All who knew him well were aware of his gleeful habit of ‘ragging’ over some question of more or less serious or perhaps only comical interest. To the end of his life he delighted in starting an argument with me over some perfectly idiotic thing or other. Of course, he always out-argued me and my final resort would be as of old: ‘Well, have it your own way!’ Then we would smile, recalling the herring of long ago. I have no doubt that he spends part of his time now, wherever he is, in this fascinating pastime of argument.”

After this fond picture Mrs. Mills’s declaration that the boy was a joy to his parents from the day of his birth to that of his death will appear an obvious statement. She



says he was "truthful, obedient, studious, helpful, kind-hearted, because it was his nature to be so. It was never necessary to train him in these qualities. He was incapable of anything low or mean." The associates of his later years endorse these claims. It would be an absurd distortion, however, a mawkish injustice, to leave the impression that Mills was goody-goody or sentimental, or just whimsically contentious. Nothing could be farther from the truth. There was nothing of the milksop or the mollycoddle about him and equally little of the eccentric or the perverse. His goodness never degenerated into weakness. His gayety and his affectionate disposition were shot through even in his childhood as well as in his manhood with a spirit of aggression, a combativeness which went far beyond the mere clash of wits, and which, while generally asserting itself in worthy causes always expressed an individual view, a strong will and a temperament of smoldering fire.

Of boyhood manifestations, his mother says: "He was always keen for games and play, full of life and high spirits. He filled the house and its surroundings with noise and shouts of laughter. I had to reprove him—it was the only thing I had to reprove him for—for his tendency to wear a chip on his shoulder in his mixing with boys of his own age. It seems to be the nature of small boys to pummel each other and he was no exception."

So the first years slipped by. The family lived in these early years in the house which Mrs. Mills's father bought in 1845, shortly after his marriage. In 1889 there was an important change. Quincy was about five and a half years old when his father decided to leave Statesville and go into business with a friend in Richmond, Virginia. The experiment, however, only lasted two years; it turned out unfortunately. As a result, the family moved, in March, 1891, to South Boston, a small town of three or four thou-



sand people in the same state. They remained there three years until the spring of 1894, and there we first find Quincy figuring as a schoolboy. He was seven and a half years old when he was enrolled as a pupil in the primary department of the South Boston graded school. He was a willing, even an eager learner. Already he had the faculty of exciting interest in others and winning their affection. He remained in the school until the spring of 1894 when his parents decided to return to Statesville. He was then a little more than ten years old. Upon his leaving, his teacher wrote a note about him to his mother. It is of value as showing the estimate which a trained observer, unconnected with him by blood ties, placed upon him thus early, so it is inserted here:

DEAR MRS. MILLS:—You don't know how I hate to give Quincy up. He is such a dear nice little fellow that I shall miss him much. I have become very fond of him during our school relationship, and I think all the scholars are as sorry as I to see him leave. He is a perfect gentleman in manner and in every way. Well may you be proud of such a son.

When you have a picture of Quincy to spare, please send me one.

Sincerely yours,

NANNIE HARRIS.

In South Boston, the natural bent of the boy's mind first asserted itself. He took to the pen, apparently by his own spontaneous impulse. His mother tells of it thus: "At this period Quincy began writing little poems and stories, which he would bring to me to read and talk over. I thought them wonderful for his age, but my praise was doled out sparingly and my admiration kept to myself, as I did not want to turn my child into a self-conscious, conceited little nuisance." It may be interjected here that to the day of his death Mills's total lack of self-conscious-



ness, the modesty which tempered his sense of his own capability, was one of his most winning characteristics. But to return to Mrs. Mills, she goes on: "Some of these first efforts are among my treasures now and they are as precious to me as the best editorials he wrote for *The Evening Sun!*"

The new phase of life, begun with the return to Statesville, caused an interruption in the writing habit which was not resumed until young Mills was a student at the University of North Carolina. Mrs. Mills explains: "The break was due, perhaps, to the fact that our Statesville home was constantly filled with relatives or friends. As we were never alone, there was no opportunity for the quiet and concentration needed for such work. Then, too, I had him take music lessons for two years. He liked music and got on famously, but perhaps he should have used the time in outdoor sports with other boys. I am angry with myself whenever my mind brings up the picture of my little boy perched on the piano stool, practising away, cheerfully and zealously—that was how he did all his work." Really there is no ground for reproach; Mills was intensely fond of music and in his later years was an habitual listener at the Metropolitan Opera House, or indeed anywhere that songbirds of passage gave opera in New York. He never pretended to critical judgment, but he had a thirst for melody, which was not altogether uncultivated, and Mrs. Mills herself adds to the passage just quoted these words: "Often he was thankful for the knowledge of music that these two years gave him."

At the same time, outdoor sports, school studies and the social side of life were not neglected. It was unquestionably his constant intercourse with the friends who flocked to the Statesville home that gave him the habit of pleasant relations with all sorts of people, his ready gift of conversation and the easy unconsciousness that made him what is



popularly called "a good mixer." As for sport, we find him through his early years enjoying outdoor amusements of all sorts. He played at boyish games with zest and skill; more of this will appear as a phase of his college career; he loved the country. North Carolina has no large city, only towns of greater or less size, and all colored as to their ways and standards by their rural surroundings. Except for his two early years in Richmond, Mills's entire life until he came to New York was spent in the environment of small communities. If he had something of town bringing up, he was almost equally a country boy, and he was not a city product in any degree. He had an ardent love of the country and down to his army days used to go off frequently for long woodland and meadow strolls with a cherished companion. As his boyhood wore on, he roamed far and wide through the woods of Iredell, steeping his nature in the beauty of the land and the intoxication of the free air.

He had a considerable mechanical turn also. He was interested in machinery and tools. He began by making wooden toys for himself; later he strung telephone lines and built useful pieces of furniture. Among the toys he made were miniature cannon; his mother still has some of them packed away at her home in Statesville. They are made of wood and mounted on cast-off wheels found about his grandfather Mills's farm. Like all boys he loved toy soldiers. During his years at Statesville, he spent much of his time on this farm which lay on the outskirts of the town. There he learned the real country life. It was a strong influence in his development. Concerning this period, his aunt, Mrs. Cowan, his father's sister, furnishes some characteristic recollections.

"He was always," she writes, "a bright, happy child, never discontented with his lot, or wishing for other play-



grounds, or 'someone to play with' as is usually the burden of an only child's existence. When he wanted to play Indian, he would represent Sitting Bull, Spotted Tail or some other chief by turns, pitching his teepee anywhere he found room, using chairs or anything that came handy to spread his tent cover over. Many are the times I remember having trouble getting the chicken or turkey feathers tied to his sunny curls at just the right angle; when he looked into the mirror and they did not stand just right they had to be re-tied, sometimes over and over. Then the draping of Grandmother's big gray shawl was another art that was often difficult; no Indian blanket was ever arranged on a warrior's shoulders with more care.

"Later came the soldier and sailor age when he built forts all around and sank bell-buoys—made of beef juice bottles—in the fishpond at his grandfather's; he also built war-ships, one of which, covered with scraps of sheet iron, with toy cannon mounted on the deck, was still at the old home after the boy had grown to manhood. This ship was at least four feet long, and a very good model—considering it to be the work of a child who had never seen a seagoing vessel of any kind.

"Quincy had quite a following of small boys at this time, and he was always the captain or leader in their games. I remember his bringing a basket of fireworks down to Grandfather's one Christmas night to fire off around this same pond; all the children of the neighborhood gathered, and what a good time and grand celebration they had. A spark dropped into one of the baskets of 'babywakers' and 'devilchasers'; one boy jumped into the midst of the resulting explosion to stamp out the fire and save what he could; but fortunately, no one was hurt while everybody enjoyed the excitement; we older people laughed and were frightened at the same time. My own last letter from Quincy, written on the 4th of July, 1918, referred to this



explosion of the Christmas fireworks, or, rather, I could read between the lines that he was thinking of that long-ago fun. He wrote that they were very quiet that day, that it was the most quiet 4th of July he could ever remember spending; but he added, 'We will have fireworks and celebration enough to pay for it—and it will not be baby-wakers and devilchasers.'

"As well as I remember he never cared for hunting, though some of the boys of his friendship thought themselves great sportsmen. One of his uncles used to offer to take him duckhunting down the creek, but I do not remember his going, though he may have. I recall that he went fishing with another uncle, and seemed much pleased with the outings, whether they brought home fish or not.

"Quincy was always a serious, thoughtful child, respectful to older people and kind to children; his mother read to him from the time he could listen, and his mind was stored with the best thoughts from his earliest days. When he was older he read good literature, never trash; I have heard him say that the popular novels, generally read, held no attraction for him. When he first read Kipling, his verdict was that Kipling was coarse, but later he became very fond of him and said he just saw life as it was, 'Each in his separate star.'

"When he was a very small boy we used to be greatly amused at his quaint sayings; on one visit to his Grandfather's, a pet rooster deprived him of a biscuit, picking it out of his hand. One of the uncles never got through laughing over Quincy's elegant and eloquent remarks addressed to the rooster which ran something like this: 'Oh! you imp of blackness, you son of Belial, you thieving, dishonorable coward to take the bread out of children's mouths instead of scratching for an honest living!' This was when he was hardly more than an infant.

"When my little daughter, Anna Cowan, came to us,



Quincy was away at school, but he came home to see the first arrival in the family since his own. He was delighted with his new relative, and said he would be an uncle instead of a cousin to her; then and there he made plans for her future, even discussing her behavior as it should be when she was grown up.

“Then came the college years when he was a prize student at the University of the State. How proud we were of his record! With what pleasure we followed his career, and through those busy years he would take time to write to this baby cousin occasionally. And they were busy years. A man cannot take his work seriously, be editor of three college periodicals, correspondent for two newspapers, win the Phi Beta Kappa key and medals and honors in all his work, and not be busy.

“After his graduation he passed out of our home life but for the letters and gifts that he constantly sent; he never made a business or pleasure trip anywhere without remembering Anna Cowan. We have souvenirs from many cities he visited in his newspaper days. Then came the final letters and cards from beyond the sea, all so sacred and precious. I am sure the world is better for his passing this way.”

Miss Nannie Williams Mills, of Statesville, another aunt, has also contributed pleasant childhood anecdotes: “My memory of Quincy’s visits at home,” she writes, addressing Mrs. Mills, “rarely goes back to when my little brother, Lee, was living, though I know Quincy was then sometimes at home. I remember sending Allen Caldwell, the eldest of the Rev. Dallas Caldwell’s boys, up to your house to bring Quincy down home, as he was too small to come alone. Those boys—there were three of them—were a rough and tumble lot, and with Hugh, Lee and Quincy would have blood-curdling Indian fights, with handmade



wooden weapons, bows and arrows, daggers and so on. Sometimes I feared they would really hurt each other, but Quincy, the youngest of the gang, always escaped injury and enjoyed it as much as any.

“It was after the death of Lee that I had Quincy with me so much. It must have helped me to bear that first real trouble, for I had the care of him just as I had had of Lee, and loved to stay out in the open to entertain him. I remember taking Quincy to the meadow to play in the little stream which fed the two fishponds; this was such a shallow stream that it was fine for him to wade in, but it was slippery, and on one occasion he was splashing along, having the best of times when his feet slipped and down in mud and water he went. He didn’t mind the ducking, but he hadn’t any dry clothes at our house and could not go home in these. So I hunted for some of Lee’s which he had when about seven years old; but when I had Quincy dressed the trousers would not meet round the waist, he was such a fat, round youngster, so we helped out the bands with string in each buttonhole and soon had him back at play. I have always thought that Quincy must have been a very much better developed child at seven than Lee was, as this incident shows.

“One of the pleasures Quincy most enjoyed was playing circus. After each circus that visited town we had a perfect wave of trapeze performances in the old barn or on a rope trapeze hung from a big oak tree just in front of it. Quincy would bring Rob Rickert, Oscar Rousseau and Allen Mills down home with him and these four would perform daring feats, hanging by their feet, head down, being their most wonderful act. The boys would take turns performing in this way, often having to boost each other up until they became expert enough to hold on unaided. One day when such a show was in progress, something else popped into Quincy’s active mind, and off the



first three actors went to the pond, leaving poor Allen hanging head downward. Allen wasn't very expert, the ground beneath was stony and some inches out of his reach, therefore when he realized that he had been deserted he set up a howl that reached me, indoors, but not the boys. I went to the rescue, finding a very red-faced little boy, not from anger, however, but from his topsy-turvy position. But as soon as I released him from his uncomfortable plight he ran off to join the others, and there was no further disturbance.

"The pond was, perhaps, the greatest delight of all to Quincy at Grandpa's. It afforded all sorts of sports, from wading and swimming in summer and skating and sliding in winter to sea-fights all the year round. Quincy's mind was well stored with stories from history and fiction of naval battles and deeds of piracy, and many such fights as that of the *Constitution* and *Guerriere* and the *Monitor* and *Merrimac* were reenacted on the peaceful waters of our pond. Quincy would work for days with hammer, nails, old planks and tin sheathing, constructing gun boats; he had them from three feet in length down to only a few inches. These finished, he and his companies would wade out and anchor a *Monitor* far out upon the pond, then place toy cannon upon the banks and open battle on the boat. It was interesting to watch, for the cannon were often loaded with real powder and made a realistic imitation of the genuine thing. I used to wonder if Quincy would go into the navy when he grew up, as all naval affairs were so fascinating to him in early boyhood, and when he went to Plattsburg I reminded him of those former pleasures.

"Well I remember Katie's funeral. Katie was the black and white spotted cat that Ed. Carlton shot. Quincy was deeply grieved, and wanted to bury Katie in some place where the grave would be undisturbed. It was decided



that Grandpa's place was permanent enough to serve the purpose and a large pasteboard box served as a coffin in which Katie's body lay in state overnight on the back piazza of your house. Next morning you and Quincy brought the remains down home, and great masses of violets both in the box and to put on the grave. We three selected a suitable spot and proceeded to dig the grave ourselves. It was a very real trouble to Quincy, and between sobs he worked until his task was completed. But during the burial a negro boy who was working about the lot passed by, and, seeing the flowers, was so amused that he forgot all decorum and laughed aloud, saying to Forney, 'Good Lawd, Mistah Forney, dat woman done put blossoms on dat cat's grave!' Quincy stopped in the midst of his last bit of smoothing up the mound, and just pelted Jim with stones for his ill-timed levity. I was both scandalized and tickled, but dared not let Quincy know, as it would hurt his feelings. Never since have I thought of this incident without a smile, for Quincy's quick transition from grief to rage was so ridiculous and so pathetic.

"When I think back on Quincy's playing I remember that he was always the leader, and his boy friends willingly followed, rarely ever disagreeing over their games. I never knew Quincy and those boys, his daily companions, to fall out and fight over anything, down home. If anything didn't go to please him, he commanded the boys to do differently, and they yielded. One day I chanced to go into our dining room just in time to see Quincy give Allen Mills a sharp box on the ear. I enquired the reason for such treatment of a guest, and Quincy answered in a dignified tone that Allen was meddling with some ornament I had forbidden the boys to touch. I couldn't do other than let the case rest as Quincy had arbitrated it. Allen took the reproof without resenting it, as far as I observed."



Among the papers which Mills has left are the sketches or first drafts of several short stories. He had not given any great time or effort to this sort of writing. The pieces are mere experiments, never fully elaborated and showing no sign that he ever tried to publish them. They afford some interesting light, however, upon the inner workings of his mind. One of these, which he entitled *When Dreams Come True*, and which he has himself marked as resembling Stevenson's *Will of the Mill*, has its scene undoubtedly upon this land of his grandfather's as recalled by his own adult memory. In the person of the hero of the tale he appears first "walking down a narrow lane, thickly starred on either side with daisies." He completes the picture: "Before him the way dropped precipitously into a narrow valley, at the bottom of which his eye caught the clear waters of a shallow brook flashing in the sunlight. Beyond it the land rose steeply to the opposite hilltop, which was crested with wood. The rolling fields around, where they were not luxuriant with corn, were bright with daisies, like the lane."

He credits his hero with that impression, which many people experience, of the scene and the action of the moment being a revival of something in his past. It has an intimacy that haunts yet eludes him. As he goes on down the path he comes upon an old man and a little boy. They are on opposite sides of the brook, which is so narrow that he could have leaped across it with ease. "The child, bareheaded, with towsled locks, shining in the bright light, stooped over the water's edge, absorbed in floating a tiny canoe, whittled from an elder stalk. The old man stood regarding him earnestly, his bony hands folded before him over the handle of a staff, on which he leaned." The old man's beard was silvery white, but his features were hidden by the brim of a soft black hat. He was as concentrated upon the child's actions as the child was upon his



boat. He exclaims: "My boy, I would give all I possess to be just you and play again in the stream."

The boy lifts his face and the hero recognizes himself of bygone years. The boy sees it too, and exclaims, "Why, I am you." The old man turns; he also is the same being in another phase. "Who am I?" cries out the hero in his prime. "You are our dreams come true," the others reply.

It is a curious bit of mysticism, expressing an undercurrent in Mills's nature. It indicates clearly the effect of his countryside experiences not only on the pictorial equipment of his mind but on the current of his musings as to the nature and meaning of life.

But besides the contemplative effects of his days on his grandfather's farm, this time gave great opportunity for his love of soldiering. He and his boy companions formed an army of the fancy and they campaigned all over the fields and hills and through the woods and valleys. They fought battles, made long marches and built forts upon the high ridges. His liking for things military ran beyond the ordinary adolescent love of glitter and noise. He planned strategic movements both with his tin warriors and with his comrades and fought them in an odd spirit of reality. His parents talked with him in his fourteenth or fifteenth year of entering the Academy at West Point. There was good reason to think he could secure the appointment from his home district. He was quite clear, however, that he would not like the monotonous routine of soldiering in time of peace. It was the stern business of real war that appealed to his eager and idealistic nature and not the formalism nor yet the showy, ornamental side of the martial career.

Throughout the entire boyhood period his love of books and their contents was an all pervading influence. In the Statesville epoch it had a special aspect, which may best



be described in the words of Mrs. Mills. "My mother lost her sight when Quincy was a small boy," she writes, "and all my spare time thereafter was given to her. Every day I read aloud the state and national political happenings and such news of foreign governments as was published in the Southern papers. During the sessions of the State Legislature she wanted to hear the daily proceedings of that body.

"Interest in politics is part of the Scotch-Irish birthright. In our section of the South, political discussion is carried on wherever men meet, and, often, the women are as keenly interested as the men. This was always the case in our family. My aunt, Mrs. S. A. Sharpe, my mother's sister, though now almost ninety-two years old, I found, during a stay that I made with her in Statesville last winter (1919-20), still occupied her mind to a large extent with public affairs. It had been so all her life. My mother, too, had this racial trait in an unusual degree, and the fact that my father had been in the thick of political activity in our part of the State intensified her interest.

"No effort was ever made to draw Quincy's attention to our political readings, but he could not help hearing some of them or the conversation that naturally was based on them. We soon found that he was listening keenly, absorbing much information and forming political opinions. It came naturally to him. It was part of his spiritual inheritance.

"At night, the reading aloud was continued, but it took an entirely different direction. The lamplight hours were devoted to fiction, and at Quincy's urgent dictation every story of the Revolutionary period that could be found had first choice. Among them were many old romances by Kennedy of Maryland and Simms of South Carolina, which are hardly known to-day, except perhaps to a few in their own section. My mother had enjoyed reading them in her



girlhood and her grandson's delight in hearing them revived her pleasure. She was a lifelong lover of Scott, too, and Scott we always fell back upon when the newer books seemed insipid. Poe, Hawthorne, Dickens, Bulwer, Victor Hugo, George Eliot, Stevenson, Mark Twain, Conan Doyle—his *Refugees* was a great favorite—and numerous others yielded us many happy nights.

“Another ancient book we enjoyed that was an old friend of my mother's was Judge Thompson's *Green Mountain Boys*, published in 1840. This old romance of Revolutionary days was widely popular in our section, and many wellworn copies were owned in our town and county. On the surface, it seems odd that a book written by a Vermonter and dealing with the exploits of Northern soldiers should have penetrated the South and gained lasting favor. The explanation is that it tells the story of the New England Scotch-Irishmen who shared our fight for independence, and the bond of race was there to awaken our interest and sympathy. This book still has readers in the South and has not been forgotten here in New York, for the Central Library now has in its circulating department a copy showing signs of use.

“These nightly revels in the world of imagination went on for years. They were of all seasons, though naturally the long winter darkness gave the fullest opportunity. I wish I had the power to convey the picture of our Southern home, the wide open fireplace, the old-fashioned furnishings, my blind mother and my little son listening eagerly, he with his pet cat on his knees—he was such a boy for pets! It may be that Quincy became surfeited with fiction during these years, for he cared little for it after reaching manhood. In the latter part of his life Mrs. Burnett and Margaret Deland were the only novelists for whom he retained a liking; their books he never failed to read as they came from the press.



"I inherited from my father the love of reading aloud and his power to keep it up for hours without tiring. Many times I have been thankful that, since I had to be eyes for my mother, this gift was mine. In looking back over my life it is easy now to see the purpose in the gift. It was intended to lighten the affliction of my mother and it contributed to the mental development of my son."

Parallel with this home life of love and cultivation, Quincy Mills had another life, the precursor of his career as a man. The boy going to school enters upon the first stage of that duality of interest which, at least until these modern days, was the most marked differentiation of the masculine destiny. We have already had a glimpse of Quincy Mills as a schoolboy of ten at South Boston. He went to school in Statesville for five years from 1894 to 1899 and there he always led his classes, a willing student whom it was never necessary to watch or to drive. There is but one harsh memory of this time. He had a clash with one of the teachers of the Statesville graded school. It was when he was about twelve years old; he complained of injustice and expressed unwillingness to remain in the school. His mother looked into the charge and satisfied herself that there was ground for it. She therefore removed him to a private school. "The change," she explains, "was absolutely necessary; he could not advance under the smart of unfair treatment; you had to earn his liking and respect if you wanted him to work with or for you."

He seems to have had two teachers who had a great effect upon him and upon whom he made a marked impression, Mrs. Frances Tunstall Dowd and Miss Laura Lazenby. Both ladies have written their recollections of him for use in this book.

"It was a pleasure to teach Quincy Mills," Mrs. Dowd writes; "his intense interest in his studies was an in-



spiration to the teachers. He was always amiable to his fellow pupils and his wonderful consideration for older people always impressed me. An admirable trait was his love and admiration for his mother. He was thorough in work and never sought to shirk a duty. He was specially interested in Latin and had one of the brightest minds that I ever taught."

Miss Lazenby contributes several illuminating sketches both of the boy and of the atmosphere in which he grew up. She writes:

"A bright-faced boy, one of fifty in a crowded schoolroom of the fourth grade, stands out prominently in the memory of his teacher, not so much because of the things he said or did, but from the abiding feelings created by his personality. There had been foundation building-in for good; it was borne in upon the observer that the silent work at home had been done on the principle that 'what we make a child love and desire we make him learn.'

"He was an honorable 'trusty.' He sat in a back seat, but at every opportunity he was at his teacher's side to talk of interesting incidents of the school day or of local events, humorous occurrences generally. Often there was a vein of sly mischief in the chatter. He was a real boy, full of life, yet he had such a clean-cut, sensible attitude toward the classroom work that he carried cheeriness even into routine drudgery. He went over much of his lessons with his mother and frequently shared the benefit of her teaching with his companions. Even at his early age he showed a fine appreciation of books. His love of the best reading was characteristic, a product of his home guidance.

"He was an only child, a great misfortune to him, his mother thought, but he learned early to bear himself well



with other children. He knew how to give and take. But he always seemed more at ease and happier with grown-up people.

"A walk with Quincy and his mother one afternoon in October is a treasured memory of mine. To one who knows October in the Piedmont section of North Carolina not much need be said of the picture or the atmosphere. His ancestors were early settlers here and owned much of the eastern and middle portions of this town (Statesville). A little spring bubbled up from a hillside and the rill of crystal drops had furrowed a tiny, beautiful channel toward the far-off ocean. For more than a mile we followed its windings. We rejoiced in its growing motion, we noted the erosion of its banks, we gathered flowers and watched the gay, winged life along its borders. We came to his grandfather's fishpond. We gathered material for future study. When I think of it, I am reminded of Mrs. Hemans's lines:

"Child of the earth! Oh, lift thy glance  
To yon bright firmament's expanse,  
The glories of its realms explore  
And gaze and wonder and adore.

"Only, of course, it was not the glories of the firmament we were enjoying but the beauties of the earth. But the ecstatic feeling was the same. Quincy's face and spirit, so radiant with happiness in contact with nature and nature's God, is a gracious recollection to his boyhood teacher. I love to think that now, unhampered by earthly limitations, he has a perfect enjoyment of the glories of the universe, not only in creation and preservation but in redemption."

In September, 1899—the day was the 23rd or 24th—Quincy entered the preparatory school at Oak Ridge,



North Carolina. He spent but one year there, completing the two years' course in that time and making an average of 99 5/16 in his studies; his diploma, qualifying for entrance into the University of North Carolina, was received in May, 1900. Oak Ridge itself is a tiny village. There is just the group of school buildings with a few stores and homes. Attendance there carried with it no change in the small town surroundings amid which Mills's youth was passed. The experience, however, must have had a very great effect on his character. It will be gathered that he was somewhat a homebound child down to this change. Here he was thrown into an entirely different medium. He was grouped with boys of his own age. He had to live with them, adapt himself to them and win their good opinion and friendship. In short, this was his first apprenticeship in the trade of being a man, in which he grew up a master craftsman.

At the time of his graduation from this school, he was only sixteen years of age. He looked even younger, a mere child; so his parents decided it would be best for him to postpone entering college. He spent the winter of 1900-1901 at home in Statesville, with the intention of entering at Chapel Hill in the fall of the latter year. But then came the first serious setback of his career. In June, 1901, he fell ill with typhoid fever and was long in recovering. When the time came for registration at the University in September, he was still unable to sit up for more than half an hour at a time, and he had to be lifted from his bed to a chair and back again. Not until the mid-winter of 1901-2 did he gain sufficient strength to resume a normal life. He then went to Florida to visit the family of Mr. Hugh Mills, his father's brother, and he made a stay of from two to three months.

The visit was marked by a touch of romance; he was now eighteen years old, the age of sentiment. His mother



writes of this episode: "Some time before this he had been smitten with the charms of an unusually pretty and vivacious girl friend of about his own age, the 'L.' to whom he wrote an early poem. But when he returned from his trip far south, he was engaged to a Florida lass, who was, however, of North Carolina ancestry, a descendant of one of the Mecklenburg 'Signers.' She would have made him an admirable wife, and many times I have regretted that the inclination grew cold, that he did not marry her on the completion of his studies as he fully intended to do when he entered college. But I know that love is not the growth of human will. There is no blame to be ascribed for the natural indecision of youth."

The poem "To L." is a sonnet. Though written and printed in *Yackety-Yack*, the University year book, in 1906, it obviously fits in here. It reads:

To L——.

Sweetheart, I mourn that with a face so fair  
A heart so cold, so pitiless, should mate,  
That doth delight to scorn a lover's prayer  
And comfort finds with mocking at his fate.  
When you encourage with your laughing eyes,  
And truant locks lure on, o'er rosy cheeks,  
My hope leaps high—alas, how soon it dies  
When confirmation in your heart it seeks.  
Your sweet-arched lips that promise to caress,  
If only I take courage to go on,  
Lose in a trice their tempting tenderness,  
And with your frown my day-dreams all are gone;  
    Ever my fate thy glorious self to see,  
    My hopes for crowns to wear but mockery.

Even at this early period the boy had developed some oddities of inclination, some peculiarities of taste which remained with him in manhood. For instance, he was



very fond of purple. At the University, he was delegated in his freshman year to choose the colors for his class. He selected purple and white. When, later, he had to drop a year on account of illness, he expressed to his mother a wistful regret for the loss of his colors. His love for thistles was not strange considering his ancestry. There was a Scottish tinge to his surroundings. The family, the community, had a filial affection for Scotland; many old Scottish words and phrases were used by his grandmother and other Statesville residents. Burns and Scott were favorite poets. Mrs. Mills records that her father, as she was told by those who knew him, frequently recited passages from both, to the great pleasure of his hearers.

More curious was young Quincy's fancy for the cactus. He so liked this bizarre plant that he made a study of it in his school days and a collection of varieties of it. Akin to this taste, perhaps, was his interest in gargoyles. He studied them through pictures in books all through his life and we find him attracted by specimens he saw during his war days in France. His mother says: "We had an old copy of W. S. Gilbert's *Bab Ballads* illustrated by the author with queer, gargoylish pictures which caught and held Quincy's fancy when a tiny boy. The ballads had to be read over and over and were successful rivals of the Mother Goose jingles. In after years the Gilbert and Sullivan operas were prime favorites, and his liking for the Ballads persisted to the end."

In fact he had a certain love of the grotesque and it is not strange that the art of the Spaniard, Goya, held a strong fascination for him, although he placed Rembrandt at the head of the list of the painters of all time. He also had a liking for Egyptian art and spent much time over curios from the land of the Nile in museums and upon illustrations of them in books. This interest, however,



indicated no general fancy for trinkets. He positively disliked jewelry of all sorts and could not be induced to wear a ring or a scarf pin. The one exception was the ring engraved with Masonic emblems which he bought a short time before sailing for the battlefront, and the purpose in wearing this was not that of personal adornment.

Summing up the period of the childhood and early youth of her son, Mrs. Mills thus comments:

“Quincy’s sense of duty, his willingness to take up the responsibilities of life developed when his years were few. In fact, he must have had these qualities always and the family circumstances intensified them. His contempt for easy self-indulgence was largely due to the self-denial he had to practice in childhood. Poverty is a fine discipline, and one thing it surely does is draw closer the family ties when parent and child have struggled with it together.

“I have never known any other child who had Quincy’s intense patriotism. His country’s history, her welfare were matters of thought with him at an early age. He was remarkable in this respect. Of him it could be said that he never saw his country’s flag without an up-welling of emotion. In later life, long before the storm of 1914 broke upon the world, America’s defenseless condition, the need to make ready for emergencies, made him uneasy for the future.

“Often he used to rally me on the way I had required his strict attendance at Sunday school and church services, until he was well on in his ‘teens,’ pretending he had been a real martyr. He always ended the tirade by declaring that when he had children of his own, they should have the same training. In this, he was much like his great-grandfather McKee and his grandfather Sharpe, who were never church members but required their families and servants to attend religious services, and gave generously to church



support. In the old days in the South, every church had a gallery built for the use of the blacks."

Quincy attended services at the Trinity Church in Statesville, where he was baptized, regularly until he left home for college. He formed a great affection for the beautiful Episcopal ritual, which he never lost although he ceased to be a regular church attendant after he came to New York. Of his attitude in this regard, his mother writes:

"While Quincy was not religious in the orthodox way, he lived his religion. He was unselfish, just, simple, brave, kind, patriotic, frank, modest, sincere, loyal. This is not the blind enthusiasm of a mother's affection for her only and lost child. It is as careful an estimate as I am capable of making of him after thirty-three years of companionship. It was my happiness to watch his mind and character develop, and, after caring for his dependent years, to have the privilege in my turn of leaning on him for guidance and help. For his high, ideal qualities were balanced by a great fund of common sense and good judgment that kept his feet on the earth and adjusted him safely to everyday life.

"There was plenty of temper to add spice to his character. If his wrath was excited by meanness or injustice, he exploded with a force that swept away all conventions and restrictions. His tongue was even keener than his pen. He could stab to the quick with it. He could be merciless in the use of this rapierlike power of speech, but he never turned it against an opponent unless he felt the chastisement was needed and deserved. It is my belief that Sidney Lanier's poem, *Remonstrance*, expresses his views on the higher subjects of thought better than any words I could supply."



## CHAPTER III

COLLEGE DAYS AT CHAPEL HILL, N. C.—AN EARNEST STUDENT WHO WAS  
“ONE OF THE BOYS”—FOOTING IT THROUGH THE BLUE RIDGE—  
VERSE GRAVE AND GAY.

THE delay of a year in Mills's entrance upon college life, owing to his typhoid attack, was a sore trial both to him and to his family. The retarding of his career was a grief, and financial difficulties were increased. He finally registered at Chapel Hill on September 8, 1902, and took up residence at the University.

The University of North Carolina first opened its doors in 1795. We have already seen Mills's claims for it of historical primacy. It possesses a fine tradition of educational standards and democratic ideals. The buildings are beautifully situated amid a park of several hundred acres. The policy of the trustees has been always to restrict the growth of the town of Chapel Hill, the seat of the institution, so that the student life flows amid surroundings simple and tranquil with the remote spirit of the country. The region is lovely, the University buildings are venerable. The atmosphere is untroubled; it invites study and reflection; it is well fitted for the young man who takes his work seriously—dreadfully dull, it may be added, for those who are in search of mere amusement or excitement. The spirit of the place, as it impressed itself upon Mills finds utterance in some verses which he wrote while an undergraduate, and which were printed in the *University Magazine*:



## One Who Gave His Life

## THE WELL.

Out of cool depths thy waters rise  
The grind's or athlete's thirst to drown;  
So thy fair form requites our eyes  
For the rude buildings that about thee frown;  
Thy dome and pillars full of grace  
Relieve the harshness of the place  
And form the campus' crown.

There gathered in our leisure hours  
The flight of time we little heed;  
Thy font and fellowship are ours,  
Our spirits rise, the moments speed;  
The laugh rings loud, the jests pass 'round,  
The campus echoes with the sound,  
All hearts from care are freed.

When to the larger life we pass,  
Where other joys and cares abound,  
Though we are lost within the mass,  
Our happiest thoughts in thee'll be found;  
The mighty oaks, the deep-toned bell,  
The sun-flecked campus that we loved so well,  
Our memories cluster 'round.

Should we drink deep Misfortune's cup,  
Our forms lie racked with sickness' pain,  
Old well, thy picture will come up  
To soothe again a tortured brain;  
Faintly we'll hear the laughter ring,  
Snatches of songs we used to sing,  
Thy waters flow again.

Then, when the years have passed away,  
One last draught we will drink, old well,  
A class, though thinned, some of us gray,  
As we bid thee a fond farewell;  
About thy font we'll stand once more,  
Recall the jests of the days of yore,  
And give the old class yell.



Mills entered with all his heart into the life of the University. He was a leading figure in every sphere of its activities. He was an eager and successful student, a leader in sports, in the forefront of collegiate literary pursuits. He made friends in the teaching body and of classmates. His career was full of success and happiness. From it, he retained a devoted love for the University and he left behind him none but cordial memories. Recalling his student days in after years, he said that four of his professors, those in chemistry, mathematics, Greek and English, had urged him to specialize in their respective subjects, as he had unusual gifts for them. Yet he came away without a trace of pedantry and free from conceit; it was the humorous and not the complimentary aspect of these tributes to his versatile powers that appealed to him. He was deeply in harmony with the tone of the place. His personality assimilated itself to the grave, scholastic atmosphere; the wealth of years and memories appealed to the deeper and more poetic side of his nature. In another copy of verses, written and published while he was a student, his sentiments of affection and veneration find voice:

TO THE COLLEGE BELL.

When with the twilight's gathering gloom  
Thy clear deep tones float through my room,  
O faithful college bell,  
Then slips my mind from all things near  
To dream of things of yester-year  
And with fond fancies dwell.

Before my eyes pass shadowy forms  
Of mighty men who through the storms  
Of civil strife and hate  
Gave to their state all that was theirs,



## One Who Gave His Life

Both goods and blood, and without fears  
Were proud to share her fate.

They trod this campus which I tread,  
Heard thy pure notes swell overhead  
To call to them each day;  
From this same fountain did they drink  
The strength to nerve them not to shrink  
When duty showed the way.

Old bell, may each full mellow note  
That wells from thy pulsating throat  
Remind me of these men;  
That while I now prepare for life  
My aim may be throughout its strife  
To be as they have been.

The four years he spent at Chapel Hill were crowded with activities. Perhaps there is no better way of giving a concrete idea of these than by copying here from the "Seniors' Individual Pictures" section of *Yackety-Yack* (the very handsome and elaborate year book of the University) for 1907, the record which accompanies his portrait:

MILLS, QUINCY SHARPE.

STATESVILLE, N. C.

*Yes; I write verses now and then.*

Age, 23; weight 125; height, 5 feet, 7½ inches; Di. Society; Phi Beta Kappa; Odd Number Club; Modern Literature Club; Press Association; Magazine Editor (2, 3); winner Fiction Medal (2); Magazine Prize (2, 3); *Yackety-Yack* Editor (3, 4); Editor-in-Chief, *Tar Heel* (4); Buncombe County Club; Vice-President Class (1); Secretary Class (3); Reader Last Will and Testament Class (4); Secretary and Treasurer Modern Literature Club; Tennis Association; Captain Tennis Team; N. C. Club; Y. M. C. A.; Winner Racket Tournament (4); Licentiate in French; Journalism.

"Q. S."



A small but weighty parcel of literary accomplishments and sarcasm. His poetical inclinations do not, however, keep him from being numbered as "one of the boys." Another one who loves to argue with Horace on Ethics. That he is a good student is shown by his Phi Beta Kappa Key and he has worthily succeeded "Vic" Stephenson in editing the *Tar Heel*.

Horace was Professor Henry Horace Williams of the chair of Philosophy, naturally a focus of argument. The "Di." was the Dialectic Literary Society, one of the two leading student organizations of the University. It was founded on the theory that "a college finds its best representation, not in the work of the professor, but in the work of the student." It defines its objects as being "to encourage honest effort in debating and to instill a spirit of true democracy into the hearts of her members." Mills was a very active member. He was elected to represent the society on the Board of Editors of *Yackety-Yack*, both in 1906 and 1907 and to the issues for both years he contributed verses and prose matter. Some of the former have been given already. Here are a couple from the 1907 book in lighter vein:

## THE MASKERS.

Laughter light-hearted from minds untasked,  
 The maze of the dance around me,  
 And forms that are fair with faces masked  
 In carnival guise surround me;  
 The touch of a hand in the mystic ring,  
 Of a waist—then a lip—what matter?  
 My senses whirl with the song they sing  
 In time with their footsteps' patter—  
 "To-day is good, to-day is bright,  
 For to-morrow what care we?  
 Enjoy the present, it is youth's right—  
 Forget life and be free!"



## A SONNET TO T—C—.

Oh, Thomas Cat! with midnight howls lugubrious  
 That rend the sessions of my sweet repose  
 Your frenzied interjections blasphemous  
 Set night aghast, electrify my doze.  
 Safe sconced upon the fence, in eldritch screech  
 Or wild demoniac yowl you revel;  
 Your caterwauls ring loud enough to reach  
 The awestruck moon, or even shame the devil,  
 How His Satanic Majesty must grudge  
 Your language phosphorescent, that doth make  
 My hair stand straight—nay, Thomas, I must judge  
 You his own mortgaged subject, doomed to bake.  
 Ah, Thomas, could you only talk like us  
 With what exquisite gusto you would cuss!

Of the prose contributions, *How It Looked to Hi*, which appeared in 1906, is a dialect sketch of an old farmer, whose boy wanted to enter the University, making a visit there himself to see what it was like. The skit, written in true college vein "to please the boys," is full of local gags. The old man describes the Campus. As he saw it, it was "a tarnal big grove all split up with paths, an' with big buildin's scattered 'bout all over it." Though "it wuz purty nigh nine o'clock, he wandered about for half an hour without seein' nobody but a few stragglin' fellers that looked half asleep an' a couple uv fool collie dogs that kepa-tearin' up an' down a-yelpin' like all nation, a-chasin' uv buzzards' shadders." However, he presently strayed into a building and a room where "a mournful lookin' man wuz a-leanin' 'gainst a table a-talkin' to 'em in a doleful voice." Presently "Hi" asked one of the fifty or so listeners what the man was talking about and the answer was "Si Kollergy," so he concluded that "Si" must be dead and they were mourning him. Soon he realized



that the sad man was crazed with grief, for he asked such questions as:

“Why don’t a cat have wings?”

“Which comes first, the hen ’r the egg?”

“Why can’t you wear your right glove on your left hand?”

The next morning, “Hi” concludes: “I tuk Sam over tew the big clearin’ an’ I set him tew plowin’ a furrer. An’ he’s plowin’ yit, fer my mind’s made up!”

In the 1907 edition, Mills has again a comic sketch, *The Mystery*. This time it is a sleeping car adventure in which the inevitable pretty girl allows one of her stockings to drift over to the keeping of the handsome young college man, in company with a blanket which the porter obtains from her berth. Her attempt at recovery from the young college man’s baggage leads to unwarranted suspicion of her honesty. The journey’s end brings, introductions, explanations and the wedding cake. It is typical beginner’s fiction; Mills was feeling his way.

Besides *Yackety Yack*, Mills gave much of his energy to the publications of the University Press Association. In 1906 he was a member of the Board of the *University Magazine*, a monthly publication; in 1907, he was editor-in-chief of the *Tar Heel*, a weekly newspaper, from which one of his editorials has already been quoted. He was, besides, during his college years correspondent for the *Charlotte Observer* and the *Richmond Times-Despatch*.

His intellectual activities did not pass without the usual campus sarcasm. In *Drags*, a collection of squibs at the expense of the year’s graduates, in the 1907 *Yackety-Yack*, the “Monopolistic Triumvirate of Literature” is made up of “‘Squincy’ Mills, ‘Prof.’ Hughes and ‘Ray’ Logan.” His mental combativeness is noted *On the Bulletin Board*, thus: “The Butting Club will meet tonight at the usual hour—Q. S. Mills, President.”



Election as editor-in-chief of the *Tar Heel* is a distinction reserved for Seniors. It is the highest literary honor attainable at Chapel Hill. In Mills's case it both determined his career in life and came to him as the result of a natural propensity for writing. He himself said always that it sent him into journalism; but the trend was there before the *Tar Heel* days. His studies in English under Professor Edward Kidder Graham were his especial delight and soon after entering college he began to produce stories and poems that gave him a reputation for literary ability with the faculty and among his fellow students. He came to the decision to make literature and journalism his career, he told his mother, alone in the *Tar Heel* editorial room in the winter of 1906-7 without consulting anyone. At the same time he made up his mind to come to New York in search of a fair opening.

Besides his work in English, Mills enjoyed especially his courses in history with Professor Kemp Plummer Battle, LL.D., and in philosophy with Professor Williams. He considered that these three men, Professors Graham, Battle and Williams were profound influences in his life. Battle and Graham appealed strongly to his heart. Williams stirred his idealism and aroused his mind as did no one else until he joined the editorial staff of *The Evening Sun*. Of the three, Professor Williams is to-day the only survivor. Professor Graham became President of the University. He and Mills maintained an intimate friendship. How close it was may be judged from the following letter:

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
CHAPEL HILL, N. C.  
March 20, 1915.

DEAR MILLS: I have just seen in the paper that you have had a boost on the *Sun*. I am certainly glad to hear of it. I



haven't heard any more pleasant news for many a day. It will give you every possible chance, I should think, to go even higher, and I have every sort of confidence that you will.

I wish you would take a day off on the twenty-first of April and come down to my installation as President. If I could have about a dozen of you fellows that I used to teach—or I'll make it two dozen—I would be willing to let all the college presidents and "stuffed prophets" go somewhere else, and we would have a real good time just among ourselves; but, of course, one cannot arrange things as one would like.

I wish you would come, or, if you can't come then, pick out some time when you can and let me know.

Sincerely yours,

EDWARD K. GRAHAM.

The boost Mills had had was his transfer from the reportorial to the editorial staff of *The Evening Sun*. Once again reaching into the future, we find that this friendship was a lasting one:

CHAPEL HILL, N. C., March 7, 1918.

DEAR QUINCY: I enjoyed one of your letters in *The Evening Sun* very much indeed and am going to begin taking *The Sun* so as to get hold of all of them that you write. I wish that you would write one to me directly or to the editor of *The Alumni Review* for publication there. You know the sort of thing we want, of course. I hope to get enough of this material from Carolina men at the front to publish in the form of a Carolina book at the end of the war, or even during the war. . . .

The University has so far stood up well under the shock of the war. We have had big losses, of course, but there has been no panic or uneasiness. I feel that so far everything has gone just as it should have gone.

With every good wish,

Faithfully yours,

EDWARD K. GRAHAM.



In what regard Professor Williams held his former pupil is shown in a letter which he wrote to Mrs. Mills on July 31, 1920. "Your son," he says, "made a permanent impression on me. I remember where he sat in my lecture room. He was what I call the intellectual type of student: that is, I have every year a small number of students who take nothing from the lecturer until they see it. They break through the words at once and search for the meaning of the utterance. They digest and assimilate the content and pass it back to the lecturer as Knowledge. It is a joy to work with this type of student. In this class belonged Quincy Mills.

"Such students are the leaders in life. They understand. When a young life like this is broken and lost, the public suffers as well as the circle of friends. I am very glad you are to make a permanent record of his life. I advised Quincy to go to New York, feeling it was his proper sphere. I watched his work and took the keenest satisfaction in his success."

In another letter, Professor Williams says: "One felt that he was a critical listener and it would not be prudent to attempt any smoke screen with him. The ball must go over the plate if one wished a strike. I prize such a student. In fact he seems necessary if I do my best work for the class. The success of the year's work is always due in a considerable degree to this type of student. Such was Mills. His presence was a substantial contribution."

Professor Battle's tribute took the form of a presentation copy of his *History of the University of North Carolina* in two volumes, which he sent as a gift to Mills upon its publication in 1907, along with heartiest wishes for his welfare. By way of contrast, it may be well to refer back here to the assurance in the *Yackety-Yack* record that he



was "one of the boys." He was full of the spirit of joviality; witness this bit of verse from that very same volume that very same year:

A PRESCRIPTION.

Break a nice fresh egg or two,  
Beat them, not too fast,  
Add some milk and sugar,  
Then, not least though last,  
Haul the cherished bottle forth  
Draw its stopper, and  
Add unto the mixture straight  
As much as you can stand;  
Use the same internally  
Whenever you feel blue,  
And it will make the landscape take  
Quite a different hue.

While Mills was generally popular among his fellow students, he had naturally some special intimates. Among these were S. Wallace Hoffmann, another Statesville boy, S. R. Logan, a classmate from Montana, who is now Superintendent of Schools of Big Horn County in that state, Harvey Hatcher Hughes, sometime lecturer at Columbia University and now a rising dramatist, Dr. Ben. Washburn, now or until lately doing scientific work in the West Indies, and Roy Brown who is an official of the North Carolina educational system. Of these, the closest to him were Mr. Logan and Dr. Hoffmann, and they have furnished for this book much interesting matter from their affectionate reminiscences of college days.

Mr. Logan only learned of Mills's death almost a year after the event, through the request made to him to write his recollections. He had missed in 1917 the Christmas letter which they habitually exchanged. "Vaguely uneasy," he says, "I waited, hoping soon to hear from him."



Mentioning the names of the five friends just given, he goes on: "In this group, Quincy represented at once the sharpest wit and the keenest sympathy. We felt the incisiveness of his intellect, the directness and forcefulness of his programme and the self-discipline and moral competency which sustained him and stimulated his fellows. Because there was none of that aimlessness and carelessness which is often associated with the intellectual brilliancy of college stars, he commanded unusual attention and respect. Duty and self-control, combined with rare quickness and grasp, made him a personality and a positive factor in the institution. Conspicuously the most scholarly member of his class, he found time and inclination to use his literary talent not only in the creation of fanciful poetry and clever short stories but also in aggressive and often deliciously ironical editorials and satirical articles dealing with practical and immediate questions that arose from day to day, in the literary magazine, the college newspaper and the students' annual. College tradition has preserved the fame he acquired as an editor. For two or three years he wrote a good part of all three publications. Well do I recall my pleasure from the implied compliment in a 'drag' some campus wit put in the *Yackety-Yack*, naming three aspiring young writers, 'the vest-pocket edition' of Mills, Hughes, and myself.

"Quincy himself was a prolific inventor of 'drags.' So much so, in fact, that he was handled with somewhat apprehensive considerateness. He became so playful with his literary 'butting,' as we called it, that he earned from his intimates the soubriquet of 'The Goat.' By virtue of his general achievements, he had already been knighted as a 'Bull,' a title by which, from time immemorial, the citizenry of that college distinguishes the half dozen or so men whose exploits in scholarship, athletics, or forensics appeal to popular approval.



“At home in any social group, Quincy resented the injustice to the general run of students wrought by a monopoly which certain fraternity groups had secured. He planned and helped to promote various expedients for enriching the social life of the students as a whole. He was vigorously democratic and social-minded in all of his reactions. He not only refrained from seeking honors; he sought to avoid class and college offices although he was militant politically in behalf of his friends and of principles of fair play and efficiency.

“Although he enjoyed the companionship of the campus crowds, he had his living quarters far removed from such distractions. In the quietest part of the village, in a small cottage hidden by great elms, he lived alone. There he did his work systematically and thoroughly. There, also, he did much dreaming. Certainly his surroundings helped to maintain the continuous thread of that inner life which differentiated him.

“Sunday afternoons it was the custom of the five, occasionally accompanied by others, to tramp through the woods about the University, sometimes a distance of seven or eight miles. No trail or stream or point of special charm was unknown to us. We always knew at first hand the changing aspects of those wilds through the seasons. Quincy’s enjoyment of outdoors was like that of a child, and he retained its impressions.

“On these excursions, sitting on the pinnacle of a cliff, lying upon a bed of ferns or moss in a background of rhododendron in bloom, grouped about a mountain spring, or idly casting pebbles into the shaded pond of the ancient grist mill, we discussed all subjects within the range of experience and imagination. The purity and the idealistic quality of my friend’s conversation, as I look back, amaze and delight me. It came to be that these oft-visited spots, romantic, historic, peaceful, legend-touched, were benedic-



tions to him. The woods were a chapel. There he found, perhaps, sought, the exaltation of religious experience.

"Real men usually try to cover up their deeper emotional impulses with a light and jesting manner. It was in that style that Quincy brought cheer into the sick room of friends. When Ben was detained for several weeks in the infirmary with a very bad appendix and an icepack, and without real food, Quincy took great pains to help the homesick, stomach-aching pal to appreciate the excruciating humor of the situation. He succeeded in giving comfort. With similar bedevilment he shortened the hours of the writer's imprisonment in hospital, although he had to give up his Christmas holidays to do it. Sleepless portions of the night during the latter part of that incarceration we spent in the most intimate discussions of religious and philosophical problems.

"I gratefully recall how satisfactorily he tormented my keeper, the nurse, for me. This was good old, distracted, sympathetic 'Appy Apgar,' whose standard expression of sympathy and concern consisted in administering additional quantities of salts. As I remember it, practically all the credit for the consolatory banquet for the unfortunates left on the Hill to languish through the Christmas recess was due to Quincy. Certainly he compelled my keeper to release me in time to participate.

"I recall an episode which really grieved us both. A young friend of mine from a remote section of the mountains, a freshman, persistently laid himself open to practical jokes. In this way he was irresistible, and of course the pranks were forthcoming. On one occasion our young friend secured admission to the infirmary under circumstances that led us, and also the doctor, to believe that he was simply giving up to an attack of homesickness. The nurse, sharing the diagnosis, and getting an excuse in a mild reference of the patient to distress in his stomach,



placed a huge and powerful mustard plaster over the length and breadth of the abdomen, then reported his act to us for applause. Poor Pete had a real trouble for comparison with what we considered imaginary ills. I thought all of this funny, and I published a jingle greatly exaggerating the humor, with the result that others came into the bleachers with us to watch the game. But half a year later, the doctor made a positive diagnosis of consumption. While Quincy was entirely innocent in this farce, I believe he experienced severer pangs of regret than did we guilty ones.

“Quincy wrote for the *Charlotte Observer* a full account of our walking tour of the mountain counties in North Carolina. Of slight build and without the rugged constitution that results from grilling athletics, farm work, and the like, in my premature judgment, he was doomed to fail in endurance. Therefore I took great pains to bolster up the proposition that it would be the basest disgrace for any of us to fall back upon the muscular resources of the old horse, Stokes, which we took along harnessed to a dilapidated carry-all, to transport our cooking utensils and supplies. But it was I who fell, and not Quincy. When I reached a certain point in exhaustion, I preferred brazen disgrace to further torture of the flesh. Quincy’s superior performance was not due to strength of body but to the unbending pride of his will. At times he drove himself forward with mind-power on the last stretch of a day’s travel, scorning to ride. Through those weeks of mud, drenched clothing, weariness and the irritation of unchanging companionship, he was courteous, cheerful, and undaunted, absorbing the views from the mountain tops and reflecting the serenity of the hills.

“One of our greatest trials was the ‘conservatism’ of the third member of our party who husbanded the contents of a silver flask so well that on the morning of the last day of



our campaign there still remained nearly half to shame him (but it did not). It was his custom generously to unstopper the flask when we had been drenched by a mountain storm and give each of us one measured teaspoonful, and no more. On the last morning there was a quiet little insurrection. While the owner slept, two young men, conscious of the righteousness of their cause, rose early, carried the precious flask a distance of a few hundred yards to a place where a spring, fringed with mint, bubbled up, from the mountainside, and there, with such an impromptu recipe as the inspiration of the occasion afforded, made some sort of mint julep. Into this concoction went five times the usual reinforcement. This ambrosial cup they succeeded in getting pretty well drained in spite of its queer taste. Thus fortified, and with consciousness of duty done, they awaited the wrath to come.

“In searching out the springs of his soul to account for the fineness and nobility of Quincy’s nature, I come always upon the vision of his mother. During the years of our intimacy, at college, among the peaks and shadows of the Blue Ridge, in the throngs and excitement of New York City, Quincy Mills lived, consciously or unconsciously, in the presence of his mother. The persistence of this image, the tenderness and constancy of his regard for her, this was not only the beautiful and beautifying element, it was a key to his character, the unfailing motive of his life. His concepts of duty and service and of love and self-sacrifice were the product of this factor with his daily experience and growth.”

Dr. Wallace Hoffmann, like Quincy a native and at present a resident of Statesville, was perhaps the closest to him of all his college mates. There was a great renewal of the bond when the Doctor, though also well above the obligatory age of service, volunteered for the war. His



maternal ancestors, the Wallaces, were a Jewish family, long settled in Iredell County, where the Doctor's grandfather established before the Civil War an herbarium, said to be the largest in the country. Hoffmann and Mills entered the University together in 1902, but later their courses diverged as Hoffmann specialized in botany and pharmacy with a view to managing the Statesville Herbarium. However he gave up that work some years ago, studied osteopathy and was practising in his home town when the war came. The War Department does not recognize osteopathy as a medical science, so he volunteered as a private in the army and as such went over to France. It was a fine and brave act and caused great joy to Mills, which he expressed ebulliently to Hoffmann himself and to all their friends.

Dr. Hoffmann has contributed his reminiscences in such form that it would be both difficult and a pity to cut them up and weave them piecemeal into the narrative. They are, therefore, although some violence to chronological order is the result, given here as they came from his pen:

### "Q.S."

BY S. WALLACE HOFFMANN.

'Tis sometimes pleasant to rehearse,  
When twilight deepens out of day,  
The tinkle of a tiny verse,  
That whiled the noontide hours away.

'Tis sometimes pleasant to recall,  
The friends of yesterday, to-morrow,  
But that's a pleasure—if at all—  
That borders very close on sorrow.

But our real friends are not in any sense the friends of yesterday only; they are our friends now and they will be



our friends to-morrow. We do not need to see them to know that they are with us, and truly does this apply to Q. S.

I saw him last in New York, about twelve years ago, at which time we had one of those satisfying "What's-it-all-about?" little talks that bridge the years of absence and put one right with his friend, until the next time. Followed ten years of silence. From France, June 12, 1918, he wrote:

DEAR WAL: Bully for you! Mother has just sent me a *Landmark* clipping *in re* your entry into service. I hope that little time will pass before you are enabled to turn your talents to more account through a commission. We certainly need good medical men in the army. I am thankful to say that thus far I have required none of the Med. Dept.'s attention (I here knock on wood) but I would as lief have a Boche operate on me with his bayonet as be treated by some of the Med. officers I know.

"Go to sick call and they give you an O.D. pill whether you have the bellyache or a broken leg," is a saying among the men, and I regret that it is too nearly true.

I have been up front for three months and more and have had some pretty exciting times now and then, but I am still all together. Don't believe that the trenches are as bad as some of the tales make them,—but they are bad enough at that.

If you are still as much interested as ever in botany you will find the fields of France a treat. I have never seen before as great a variety of wild flowers, or any so beautiful as these here in Lorraine. I hope that we may meet—though not that I will have to call upon your professional services—over here.

Until then: Goodbye and good luck!

MILLS.

My letter to him in answer to this was never received, but returned to me just before I left France, in July, 1919, a year after it was mailed, and the envelope was stamped



“DECEASED.” However I knew of his death before sailing for France in August, 1918.

On a trip to Château-Thierry I noticed a familiar face close to mine on the army truck crowded with soldiers. It was Capt. H. H. Hughes, whom I hadn't seen in fifteen years, a great friend and constant companion of Mills and mine during our college days at the University of North Carolina, in 1903 and 1904, and of course our memories took us back to the times that had been.

I remember distinctly the trip to the Hill where Quincy was to be a Freshman and I to be enrolled in the professional school. We were separated when the Sophs. rounded up the Freshmen at University Station, ten miles from Chapel Hill. The crowd didn't care to hear the Declaration of Independence from a new man, so I was soon released and permitted to mingle with the bunch that had Q. S. for the center of attraction. He was perched upon a pile of baggage in the baggage car and the assembled multitude were learning all about the “Old Lady from Smyrna” and similar celebrities—the hazed apparently getting as much fun out of the performance as the hazers. It was a Fraternity crowd conducting the entertainment and his initial performance served to make Q. S. known to the bunch that were to be his political enemies during his College years.

At the University of North Carolina in those days, spirit was intense between the Fraternity and the Non-Frat. crowd and Q. S. was usually in the midst of things, helping his crowd carry an election, breaking up the opposition caucus, and all the fights that went with class politics. Most of his friends were mine, and some of my friends were his. He was not a good mixer, or he was more discriminating, depending on the point of view.

In politics he was an ardent fighter, vice-president of his class one year, Editor-in-Chief of the *Tar Heel*, the College



paper, played his part in helping the *University Magazine* with frequent contributions, and in the publication of the annual. Probably there were a number of other honors that fell to him by virtue of ability and good work, but it is not of this that I want to tell, but of the man at his best and worst when playing and boning, for often at college studying may be a bad habit.

We took up tennis together and soon were evenly matched and spent many an afternoon in hot contest on the courts. One day Dr. Eben Alexander, the Dean and one of the politest men that ever lived, stopped to watch a point that had a hard time to decide where it wanted to stay—smash, lob, smash, volley, cut, smash and repeat—and at last on his court the ball refused to bound. Q. S.'s racquet dropped and he was about to say something when he spied "Alex." Followed a moment of mildly profane silence, and then he called sweetly across the net to me, "Well, I *thought* it anyway!" and as Dr. Alexander strolled off, his shoulders showed that he understood the proprieties.

I was only at the University two years with Quincy; during this time and on later vacations we were tennis partners or opponents whenever occasion presented. You get to know a man well in any matched contest, and Q. S. was well worth knowing. As a partner he was working for the team, as an opponent he had to be licked, as he never quit. If he won, there were no regrets; if you won, you knew there had been a battle and your opponent had been caught trying. He knew that what was worth doing was worthy of considerable effort, and so he became president of the tennis association, champion of his class, and a few things like that.

My brother joined us during the second year and was thereafter a part of the tennis combination, Q. S. being very fond of the "Beau Mice" as he nicknamed the kid.



At the University, being in the professional school, I was not supposed to study, so spent my time finding out about the library and the boys, and many an hour was passed in Quincy's room. We understood each other rather well, and if he was studying I would pick up a book and read quietly for a while, then occasional squeaks would emanate from the selected rocking-chair. If his nerves got the better of him, or the studying wasn't going very well, he would look up in exasperation and submit some remarks. I would pretend to be entirely oblivious to what it was all about, read on in silence for a while and then quietly get up and tiptoe out of the room. Next day he would come around and we were as good friends as ever. I think that we never definitely quarrelled over anything, it was my gift to be unusually exasperating at times, and when I succeeded in trying my friends to the point of a cussing-out it was regarded as a distinct triumph and of educational value.

If Q. S. had a box from home, and he often had, there was a jolly party, and he was usually on hand at the return engagements and he shone both as host and guest. We went for lots of long hikes and picnics, and when not too busy usually managed to have as good a time as we knew about.

Here are a couple of letters from Chapel Hill, that bring back memories of the old days:

Oct. 1, 1905.

MY DEAR "HOFF," I have been intending to drop you a few lines ever since I've been here—but you know what *intentions* amount to at College. I am carrying nineteen hours (Psych. included) but that is no excuse, for I haven't done a decent hour's work since I've been here. I'm going to let up on the studying proposition this year.

Things are rubbing along very smoothly. The Freshmen have already held their election and there was nothing doing



to speak of. It went Non-Frat, of course, and now the Frat Booters are scraping around trying to hold another, but it won't amount to anything. The Fraternities took in very few initiates this year. More boys got butted than I have ever seen turned down here. The present class of Freshmen have quite a contingent of Booters. The Sophs. are very weak. They have done absolutely nothing, and the Freshmen are beginning to believe that they are it. Hughes is back and I am certainly glad of it. We either play tennis or take a walk together almost every afternoon. He is one of the best eggs ever.

Our outlook in the football line is not as bright as it was. We have a fine coach, Warner of Cornell, but the material has not worked up as well as we expected. Several good men have been hurt and altogether the outlook is not very bright when you consider that we have the heaviest schedule this year we have ever had. The Thanksgiving game will be played at Norfolk this year, but there will be an excursion just the same. If the tariff isn't too high I'll go. However I may make a trip to Statesville the last week in this month instead. If I do I'll fetch along my tennis racket and maybe we can have a game or two. I've picked up somewhat.

Night before last, Will Houck, Harry Harrison and I went out on a fruit raid. It sho' was dark. We stumbled all over those Orange County Hills. Will stood on his head in a ditch, Harry fell in a branch and I capped the climax by rolling into a gully with a bag of pears on my shoulders. However, I have no kick coming. I can't see why I didn't break my neck. At present I have nearly a bushel of pears ripening in my trunk and there will be something doing later.

Sincerely your friend,

QUINCY MILLS.

Feb. 17, 1907.

MY DEAR WAL, Of course after seeing your glorious self in your natural habitat, the bughouse, it was like receiving a glass of cold water down a Fred Pinkus Collar to read your



letter, although it was just as cranky and irresponsible as you could ever hope to be. I regret that I have not said epistle by me now, but in the rush of Metropolitan life at the Hill I have mislaid it. My regards to the "Beau Mice" just the same. . . . No I am not woozy—even if Rae Logan did lead a German on the third floor of Mary Ann last night. You needn't think that because Hughes had to hold him in bed all night to keep him from choking himself to death on German verbs that I am intoxicated. Nay! But, as I was saying a moment ago, I have an inkling that you laid yourself out to butt me in said epistle. Don't do it, pard, don't do it, give up the attempt. Greater men than you have tried to do that same thing, and failed. It takes a wise man to get the laugh on a fool, you know.

However, subtracting paper amounts from your reprimand in proportion as Gethinklebug's *History of Civilization*, Bothwhowsky's *Universal and Individual* and other similarly vicious works have had deleterious effects upon the attic of your anatomy, causing an abnormal swelling of the bump of altruism and other alarming results, I have about decided not to notice you at all. In earnest, though, I appreciate your suggestions as to the propriety of using certain terms. I had never thought of them seriously, for it is very seldom, I believe, that there is a suggestion behind them that is meant to cut. Indeed, I believe that you are getting into the way of considering life in too solemncholy a manner.

Try to think—I admire your spunk in making the attempt—but don't carry the effort to the length that —— has done. He has been trying the experiment so long and so wildly that I fear that he will end up some day by taking to grunting and imagining himself to be one of his prize Berkshires—the acme of perfection in his eyes, you know. Take warning of his example.

But I have bored you long enough by this rambling dissertation on the Lord knows what. . . . Besides I must make some *Tar Heel*.

Therefore, "So Long."

Q. S.



When Quincy was a Junior, summer vacation, we had the most perfect camping trip in the rain that one can imagine. A golden time! Replete with incidents of joy and struggle to make the most of things—the mountains (with Rae Logan along to compare them with his intimate knowledge of the Rockies), and makeshifts to enjoy contraband from mint julep to a wonderful oyster soup made out of canned oysters and condensed milk. Then there were the varied efforts to make sleeping a success, such as digging a ditch to keep the rain from washing down one's neck when sleeping under the wagon. This followed the attempt of four of us to sleep in the same—a covered one-horse affair that served as baggage-and-supply transport—feet toward the middle. For some reason it wasn't a success, or was too much of a success to be enjoyed—strong smelling lantern, cheese, straw and too many feet, with the three-legged horse tied near our ears and adding to the pot-pourri. Q. S. wrote up the trip for the *Charlotte Observer*—*Footing it Through the Blue Ridge*—but there are many fond memories, that could never be written, of this wonderful trip.

In some letters from Hughes around this time I find Q. S. mentioned and extracts from written records are more accurate than any memory of incidents of fourteen years ago, and show his interest in things. Here are some:

Quincy tells me that you played tennis, Xmas; but he preserves the silence of the damned in regard to the score. Ben, old measly Ben, you remember him—and Quincy and I went out to Polyfolium Cliffs (Ben insists on calling it Pollyflodium) to take some pictures. I wish you could have been along; we had oceans of fun. Quincy's tongue was out by the time we crossed the bridge above Purefoy's. When we got within about ten yards of the top of the cliff (we came in from above) Quincy threw himself flat on his face on a patch of moss and groaned for joy. Without lifting his head or even opening his



eyes, he swore it was the most beautiful place and commanded the finest prospect in the whole state. The cliffs were certainly in their glory and almost merited this extravagant praise, but I think Quincy's judgment was undoubtedly influenced by that patch of moss that served so nicely for a bed.

Quincy did get a "leetle tetched in the head" about the Golden Fleece. But it was nothing serious. He didn't want me to join and I shouldn't have joined if the organization had been what he thought it was. But like a great many other members of Horace's Psych. class he has a habit of generalizing from insufficient data. The Golden Fleece is not a Fraternity in the sense we use the word in the University and never can be. It gives you a chance to get on the inside of things that no other organization affords.

Quincy and I took Christmas dinner down at Dr. C. alphonso Smith's and enjoyed it immensely. The Doctor uncorked some of his choice jokes—the ones he keeps on tap for all occasions, and Q. S. and I both laughed ourselves blue in the face (He's taking 15th Eng. and I'm takin' 14th).

We lived in the same town and that a small one, but I have no distinct recollections of Quincy during the pre-college days. He was not in my classes at school, and was at preparatory school while I was in High School. Yet we must have been thrown together quite a little in the early days, as I can dimly recall him coming to bat in a ball game that took place on my back lot twenty-odd years ago, but it is the neatly fitting sweater, rather than the boy, that makes the picture. I knew that he was an only child, devoted to his mother, studious to a marked degree, and nicknamed "Quincy-Apron-Strings" with that cruelty that girls and boys often exhibit.

It was characteristic of Q. S. to want to correct the faults of his friends as well as commend their virtues (probably *rather than* would be a little more accurate, not that he was at all stingy in recognizing good qualities), but if you were his friend and these were known, it seemed



up to him to help out a little. His loyalty was marked, and at times he seemed to think so much of his friends that he wouldn't bother to be polite. If one didn't know him well this often queered things a little.

His Code contained laws that he rigidly adhered to and not only the letter but the spirit. Not only would he not indulge in vulgarity but he wouldn't countenance it.

Life to Q. S. seemed a rather simple thing—do the thing to be done, plan ahead and be prepared. When it was written, "The end is forbidden. Thy use is fulfilled" it was given to Q. S. to respond largely and beautifully, and as I would have expected of my friend, and his memory will always be a source of pride and exaltation.

In both of the above assemblages of recollections and impressions, stress is laid on the Blue Ridge Mountain walking trip which took place in 1906 when Mills was a Junior at Chapel Hill. This was a remarkable expedition. Despite his zeal as a student and his multiform literary activities, Mills found time and energy for a great deal of physical activity. He was too light for a football player, but he was an expert in baseball and tennis. He played both from his early teens and was a pitcher of unusual quality until a sprained arm put him off the diamond, to his deep chagrin. Then he took to tennis in earnest. He was a star player at the University, was a member of the Varsity team and its Captain in 1907, winner of two prizes, and College Champion in 1906 and 1907. His interest in the game, indeed, never waned. In New York he kept in practice until he went into the training camp at Plattsburg in 1917.

But walking was his special delight. If there had been prizes for tramping at Chapel Hill, he would have won them all. He took tramps that would have knocked out



Q. S. the Junior  
University of North Carolina, 1905-6



## University of North Carolina, 1905-6











most men—and delighted in them. The endurance he gained from this habit stood by him splendidly in his last great adventure in France. Sometimes he went alone; often he had companions as in the biggest outing of all, the days spent in exploring the Blue Ridge Mountains, the region which North Carolinians call the "Land of the Sky." This time the party was four in number: Mills, "The Bo," "Loge" and "The Kid." "The Bo" was Dr. Hoffmann, who spells it "Beau" as has been seen; "Loge" was, of course, Mr. Logan and the fourth member, "The Kid," was Bate Toms of Rutherfordton, a younger lad, whom the others picked up at that place, the real starting point of the tramp. There was a fifth in the party, the old horse "Stokes" who was procured for them by the Kid. The start was held up for three days in the effort to acquire him. Mills thus describes his entrance on the scene:

On the third day, as we quaffed the water of the mineral spring, enter Stokes, heralded by The Kid with a countenance beaming with the conscious joy of work well done. The rest of us did not beam, and he who could have viewed Stokes without some misgivings must have been sanguine indeed. He limped heavily, his breath came and went in heaves and his ribs stared through his hide in a way that spoke painfully of a lack of oats and corn in his diet. We held an ante-mortem consultation about him, through which Stokes stood with downcast head, his eyes closed, swaying miserably with each breath, utterly unconcerned as to any disposition that might be made of him. Loge was the veterinarian; he shook his head despondently and said nothing. There was nothing else for it, however; we were out for a walking trip, but we had to have a wagon to carry along our kit, and it was necessary that the wagon should be pulled; therefore it was Stokes or bust, and as he did not expire before our eyes we adopted him to complete our list.



This mock pathetic picture of the old horse is from the first of Mills's six articles in the *Charlotte Observer*, to which Dr. Hoffmann and Mr. Logan allude, and which reported the trip in alternate outbursts of boyish animal spirits and emotional word painting. He describes the adventure as the product of "Junior" psychology. He had just ended his Junior year and an idea of his view of himself and the campus life is gained, when he remarks that it was not because they were entirely debilitated by the activities of the year just passed that he and "Loge" decided the trip was "absolutely necessary to their peace of body and mind." He explains that "the Freshman works because he does not know any better"; by the time Sophomorehood is reached he has learned the true relations of books to college life, but his social duties as "unquestioned ruler of the campus absorb all the energy which the Junior may devote to unalloyed ease." The Junior is "indeed a blessed mortal"; he is freed utterly from "the jag of conscience" and so, "from a maze of tobacco smoke and unconventionality he may blissfully gaze on the life of forced bustle and self-importance of the Senior."

In this spirit the excursion was begun. Sunlight and boarding houses full of pretty girls, where they dined, brightened the first half day for the four. Then they ran simultaneously into rugged country, a wild thunder and rain storm and the ford by which they were to cross the Broad river, a rippling and sparkling little stream which charmed them in fair weather. But this was their experience:

Down and down we went in a succession of jolts until we could hear the wheels churning through the running water; it was clear that we were at last approaching the ford. But we were so miserable that the knowledge made no impression on us. Our oil cloth, an improvised top of sensational coloration, had proved insufficient, and the cloudburst that had swept



upon us had beat through in a fine spray that deluged the contents of the wagon. We were dripping and cold—with no prospects for a camp, for the river, swollen already by the water from the mountain sides, was far too full for fording. Our outlook for the night was gloomy.

Stokes lunged on a little way and stopped; we could feel the wagon settle slowly under us and knew that we had mired. It was pitch dark under the trees and we strained our eyes in vain. Then came a flash of lightning; balls of fire snapped in the air about us, two knobs of flame glittered on the tips of the hames and we saw Stokes stagger in the shafts. Stokes was only stunned. Lunging forward with a strength of which I had believed him incapable, in an instant he stood trembling on firm ground again.

This was perhaps the most serious actual danger that they were in, but they had plenty of discomfort and minor mishaps, over which their young courage triumphed with laughter. Mills tells it all in such detail in his *Charlotte Observer* articles that they would fill forty pages of this book. Some of the hardships were purely ludicrous:

Breakfast done we faced a problem previously unthought of. In no effusion on a camping trip had we found any record of the washing of dishes. The Kid, as chief of the kitchen, decreed that each man should wash his own tin plate and spoon and cup. These, plus a knife and fork apiece, completed our table luxuries. For washpan, we had abundance of clear water at a pool in the branch by the roadside, but our washpan had no hot water connections, and the more soap we applied the slicker grew our tinware. Finally we abandoned the Octagon and took to plain sand, which worked better, and when we desisted we were well satisfied with the results—although I have a notion that certain particular housewives of my acquaintance might still have shied our platters out of their kitchen windows.

They camped next for a couple of days at the base of Craggy and explored all the surrounding country, bathing



under waterfalls and dancing and maybe flirting a little at night with the boarders in a nearby hotel. Incidentally, a laundress they hired "decorated the landscape" with their underwear to the edification of the same boarders. Mention has been made of the oilcloth top of their wagon. It was a parti-colored wonder; every strip was different in hue, to the delight of the country folk. But it did not keep out the wet, as has been seen, so they went to a well-stocked village store for reinforcement, which they got in still another tint. Now the Blue Ridge Mountains were not noted for their prohibition tendencies in these days any more than at present, nor were these boys prohibitionists. They had a great curiosity and Mills tells of their attempt to satisfy it:

We were travellers in a strange land and we wanted to see all there was to be seen of its wonders. No harm was in us, positively none, but was there not a chance of our getting a squint at one of the original blind tigers? The mystification of our host, the merchant, was magnificent; it took him fully twenty minutes to comprehend what the blockading business meant. Then, after much cudgelling of his memory, he found that he had once heard, many years before, of a party down beyond the South Carolina line who dealt in wine; that was all the information we could get. Seldom it is that one meets with such innocence; we gazed upon it in rapturous awe!

Yet, just around the bend of the road, we met a citizen whose legs, even at that early hour of the day, were dangerously erratic in their motion and whose face was suffused with a certain vague expression of joy as he nursed along a jug of the brownest shade. We did not disturb his bliss to ask, but the jug beyond doubt contained the water of a certain mineral spring of which we had heard. The further we travelled the more we were impressed by the variety of marvelous effects that could be worked by simple mountain lithia water. . . .

While we could arouse no overweening interest in Bald



mountain, or over the relief work that may or may not be depicted along its seamed and fissured southern front, from which it takes its name, we found abundant material in its history. Some twenty-one years ago, at the time of the Charleston earthquake, old Bald created quite a stir in its vicinity by emitting deep rumblings and growlings from the depths of its caverns, while its rugged flanks were felt to shiver with clearly perceptible tremors. The news was quickly spread that the ragged old hump of the Blue Ridge, which had lain in thoroughly respectable silence through so many generations, was in reality an extinct volcano, and might be expected to spout smoke and flame from its crevices at any moment and inundate the land with lava and ashes.

Then indeed was there fear and trembling throughout the region for many miles around; from every hilltop resounded the voice of the mourner, and in each valley echoed the songs of praise. Revival followed revival, and from Turkey Hollow to Panther Ridge there remained not a still or a mashtub to tell of the errors of the past.

Nothing happened, however. The frost came and still nothing. What naturally followed? There was the corn lying idle or the precious kernels going to feed senseless cattle. In the changing of a moon, yea, verily, before the camp-meeting arbors on the hillsides had been rent asunder by the autumn winds, lo, a thin column of smoke arose again from every hollow, while the hard grain changed slowly to liquid joy.

But the trampers could get nothing better than cider which was not even hard. Presently they started to explore the caves in which the region abounds. At Rumbling Cave in Bald Mountain they turned from a far-flung scene of lovely country into a tall narrow cleft, just wide enough to allow them to enter edgewise. They advanced warily as "Loge" lit the lantern. The air streaming from the depths of the earth chilled the perspiration on their bodies but not their ardor. They tried gallery after gallery and level after level in which the rocks



were cold and damp and the temperature frigid. They were stopped everywhere by heaps of shattered rock blocking the way. Some of the downfalls from the roof were evidently recent.

Judging from appearance another fall might occur at any time. The whole body of Bald mountain stood cracked from surface to centre into a series of immense perpendicular clefts of rock, which leaned together to form the galleries. Muffled rumblings have issued from time to time from its innermost recesses to be reëchoed through the valley, hence the name that came to be applied to the hollow in the cliff. These sounds, it was clear, had been caused by the grinding together of immense slabs in their shifting, incident to the settling of the ridge.

But there was a more thrilling experience in store when they penetrated the Bat Caves in Craggy—one of the cliff-girt giants of the region—opening on Chimney Rock Valley. The tramp to the cave mouth brings out some delicate bits of description, inspired of a hearty zest for nature's charms. In one place the explorers found "an angle of the cliff where the jagged edges of a rift in the rocky wall were cushioned clear up to the mountain's brow with the darkest of green moss, bedewed with sparkling drops of purest water. Numberless little rills trickled together with a sound subdued and inviting, suggestive of inexpressible coolness and relief to the thirsty traveler, into a shallow basin on a shelf just at elbow height." The wayfarer might drink from the rills and cool his brow in the receptacle. After that, "sordid must be the mind that would not feel a vague desire to roll luxuriously in the dripping green curtain of the cliff from its topmost edge to the dewy lacework at the foot." Unfortunately, the lining of the curtain was "quite hard, not to mention its sharp edges, and the pool too shallow to cushion the final stoppage."



The cool streamlets of Craggy freshened all the atmosphere. The explorers came on a "Blowing Rock," distinct from the more famous one in Watauga County, N. C., and stood breathing the chill air that poured from a great vertical fissure six inches wide. At last they came upon the mouth of the Bat Caves. Around it "the trees pressed close together. Thus, in having a setting of greenery, the galleries differed at the very outset from those in Bald Mountain." There were three openings. The boys tried them all but found no sign of bats. One led into a cathedral-like cave of Gothic effect. The second was unattractive.

But the third, winding in and out, over and around great blocks of stone, and along narrow ledges, risky pathways in the blackness of the granite's heart, opens a tortuous way well back from the reach of daylight. Through this, the whole party wriggled and crawled after "Loge," who went ahead with the light, until brought up short at the edge of a cliff which seemed to drop clean off to nowhere.

Linking our belts together, we lowered the lantern into the abyss without catching a glimpse of its bottom. Failing thus, we sent a fragment of loose stone whirling into the darkness. There was an interval of silence, then, far below us, there echoed a choking splash as it fell, engulfed in some subterranean pool. Simultaneously we experienced peculiar prickly sensations in the region of our scalps, and, simultaneously, we scrambled back from the yawning mouth of this black well.

Somehow we were satisfied with cave exploration, and felt perfectly willing to grope our way as quickly as possible along the clammy walls to daylight. So precipitous was our haste that we narrowly escaped going astray in a blind passageway, and then we came to know a few of the preliminary thrills that must fall to the lot of those who find themselves hopelessly entombed in such dank and slimy fastnesses with only a flickering torch or lantern to render the darkness more impenetrable around them.



## One Who Gave His Life

We were glad to get back to the entrance, and even there we found ourselves so painfully chilled that it took us some time in the shaded pathway, to grow even reasonably comfortable again. In fact, our blood did not resume its usual flow until after we had climbed to the top of the mountain and baked ourselves on a rock. It was hot enough there. It occurred to me that a dweller on this portion of the mountain's back would be doubly fortunate. He could fry his eggs on a natural spider in his front yard and freeze his ice cream simply by lowering a bucket of custard into a crevice in the rock.

We considered the proposition of opening a real estate boom on the desirable property, but gave the scheme up on finding that we would be forced to construct elevators to the level of the summit in order to interest prospective victims. When we cease to be juniors and find ourselves more plentifully supplied with the necessary wealth the "Consolidated Mountain Improvement Company" may be floated still, with a special blind tiger connection in every pantry as a drawing card.

The trip continued for several days more with pleasant meetings with natives of the mountains and summer visitors, feasts of scenery both lovely and awesome, comic mishaps and practical jokes. Mills comments on the kindness and intelligence of the mountain people. Their general bearing, he says, "gave the lie direct to the belief current as to the uncouthness of the mountaineers. In regard to the good looks of the mountain lasses, we found that report had not erred. There were plenty of them in every hollow, not the slender, fragile, flower-like specimens with complexions indicating a short-lived beauty and ill-health, but big, strong girls, full of health and vigor, rosy of cheek and as capable of enduring mountain tramps as we were."

The last stopping place was at Lake Toxaway where they found a fine modern hotel and the "most bounteous fare supplied for the most bounteous consideration."



Without the latter, "the wanderer might as well be in the Sahara, so far as a square meal was concerned." The people who made it a mountain paradise evidently thought that "paradise should be operated on a paying basis." The day was Sunday; they bathed, notwithstanding, in the lake and, being Juniors, were not shocked. Then they toiled three miles to the "gently convex summit" of the mountain. They found a long, single-storied frame hotel on it and climbed to the roof to witness a sunset which the landlord assured them was one in fifty in point of glory. As they emerged on the roof, the red ball of the sun was just sinking behind the western summits.

Extending up into the vault of the sky, above the sunset, hung a drift of mackerel formation, its fleecy waves tinged with the softest gold and pink. The rolling edges of the cloud-bank beneath glowed with a rich crimson as if fed by the fires of an invisible furnace, while the extremities of the bank flared in varying shades of yellow and orange, blended everywhere in crevices and on isolated shoulders of mist with spots of purple and pink. Out in the east one solitary cumulus head, riding alone in space, shone like a glowing opal, iridescent in the reflection of the glory of the departing day, its white mass turned into an ever changing variety of colors, brilliant in the amethyst setting of the distance beyond.

Underneath this constantly varying panorama of color effects stretched ridge upon ridge and peak upon peak, their tops bathed in the rich glow of the sunset, while at their bases from the cool recesses of the valleys clutched the sinuous gray line of the mist. Across the rank upon rank of summits suffused with the glorious light, there shot, now and then, the dark shadow of some lofty peak. Over the whole of Lake Toxaway rode a downy gray coverlet of fog shutting off from view the chimneys of the inn, and folding the shadow of the mountain into early rest. Here and there over the landscape the rare tinges of the slowly falling sun rested bright on spire and house-top in some mountain town. And always the lights were



changing, assuming new hues and showing the clouds in varying proportions, like figures in the lens of some gigantic kaleidoscope.

The scene kept them on edge until it faded out to a mere flush in the west. Then they were recalled to lower strata by the smell of hot fried chicken. "It was the crowning feature of our trip," says Mills. The next day they started for home. They rejoiced that "the incontrovertible force of junior logic had brought the jaunt to pass." It had toned up their nervous systems "to render true service in the battle of bluff of our (their) senior life." Its impressions and experiences sank into their spirits and acted as a lasting tonic. His vivid story of it intensified Mills's desire for a pen career.

In the reminiscences of Mr. Logan and Dr. Hoffmann allusion has been made to the fraternity fight in the University and—in Mr. Hughes's letter—to the Order of the Golden Fleece, of which there was a branch at Chapel Hill and which Mills evidently placed in the "frat" group. As Dr. Hoffmann puts it, he "was so strongly democratic and anti-fraternity that he was ready to go to the mat with anything that resembled a 'frat.'" According to Hughes, the Golden Fleece was an organization much broader than the Greek letter fraternities, having for its object the improvement of University life. But he had stood with the anti-frat bunch and Mills seemed to think he was deserting the colors. When they entered the University in 1902, the students were sharply divided into two camps on this question. Naturally the fraternities had no attraction for Mills. He had already developed somewhat extreme democratic ideals and he regarded them as fostering an exclusive and snobbish spirit out of keeping with true Americanism. He threw in his fighting spirit from the beginning with the anti-fraternity faction. As his in-



fluence grew, he became a formidable figure in college politics.

The *Yackety-Yack* for 1903, the year after he entered, contained a strong statement of the anti-frat position, in which this passage occurred:

It is in college politics that the lines are most strictly drawn and the fire most rapid between the frats and non-frats. As a result of these contests the non-frats boast that today they enjoy by far the larger share of political spoils. They have the presidencies and many of the chief offices of all the academic classes. The editors-in-chief and business managers of both the *Magazine* and the *Tar Heel* are non-frats. Three of the sub-marshals are of this element.

But the proudest boast of the non-fraternity men is not the reaping of honors in college politics, but that in every phase of university life "where men rise by might of merit" non-frats are found in the majority. For the past three years, half of the men whose scholarship has entitled them to membership in the Alpha Theta Phi have come from the non-frats; out of the twelve men who have represented the University in inter-collegiate debates during the past three years, eleven have been non-fraternity men. For the past three commencements all but two of the commencement orators have been non-frats and upon each of these occasions a non-frat has borne away the Mangum medal.

In athletics they break even with their fraternity college mates, although many of them find abundant exercise in some employment by which they are paying their way through college, and, consequently, are not found on the athletic field.

Alpha Theta Phi was the organization of honor men at the University in earlier days. Some time between 1903 and Mills's entrance, it was superseded by Phi Beta Kappa. Throughout Mills's time in college, the anti-fraternity lead in distinctions of all sorts, both academic and athletic, continued, nor has it materially changed



since. The share Mills took in the struggle has been well defined by Mr. Logan in his reminiscences. He was not in college politics from any selfish motive. The *Yackety-Yack* summary has shown how few offices he held either in his class or in the numerous organizations to which he belonged; yet he was popular enough to have had anything he wanted. His membership in the Buncombe County Club is an illustration of his status in this respect. He had no personal link with Buncombe County; but all the members were so much his friends that they insisted on having him among them.

So we have a picture of him working and playing alike with strenuous enthusiasm. Few youths of his age have ever lived a fuller life. Rather small and light but wiry, with wavy hair and calm eyes sometimes lighting up and dancing with mirth, a fluent and entertaining talker, an easy companion, yet with a great capacity for silence, for reserve and for contemplation, he had a distinction and a promise that his contemporaries fully recognized. His own view of college life and work is fairly set forth in a letter to his father, written February 28, 1906, in his junior year. Apologizing for infrequent writing, he says:

If a man has any ambition at all in college or wishes to develop himself in any special line, he has mighty little time after he gets to be a junior. The regular college work does not amount to nearly so much as it does during the first two years. I do not put more than a third as much time on my books as I did formerly; the balance goes to the magazine or some other outside work. This outside work is what counts for the most and will be of most value in after life. The man who shuts himself up between the lids of his books while here certainly loses.

But in spite of hard work and many occupations, his temperament led him constantly to poetic expression.



One curious feature of his verses at this time was his vision of the sea swept by storm. He had never made a sea voyage, but he had lived by the ocean during his stay in Florida, and it is reasonable to conjecture that he derived his inspiration and his material from observations at that time. His imagination must have been much stimulated to compel such expression as this:

THE NORTHER.

When over the sea the north wind comes  
Loud is the tempest's roar;  
Over the waves the cloud-banks loom,  
On the harbor-bar the breakers boom,  
Tossed is the ocean floor.

Out on the deep the good ship reels  
Under the flying gale,  
Loud and long each straining mast  
Groans in the grip of the driving blast,  
Far streams each storm-rent sail.

Now in, now out, her gallant keel  
Churns in the seething flood,  
Buffet on buffet the billows deal,  
Until the shuddering sailors feel  
A shock that chills their blood.

The north wind conquers; once again  
The vessel rears her bow,  
Pauses proudly an instant, then  
Plunges deep—the hurricane  
Rules supreme master now.

But his verses were by no means always so tragic in tone. Gentler passions also had a place in his soul. The lines which follow have a touch of mystery about them. Nobody now can tell the identity of "K." He never spoke



of any such sweetheart to his mother, his universal confidant, and "K." was not the initial of anyone whom he was known to admire. "Perhaps," Mrs. Mills remarks, "this was just the ideal of his dreams." The verses appeared in the *Magazine*:

To K——.

Locked in the secret chamber of my heart,  
 From every stain and blot of life secure,  
 I guard thy portrait, sacred and apart,  
 As long as hope and ardent love endure.  
 Tender and gentle brimming o'er with grace,  
 With eyes that brighten with the purest love,  
 A delicate, fair beauty wreathes thy face  
 That glows with radiance given from above.  
 And so thy image, seen as by a veil,  
 An airy mist obscured, smiles on serene  
 Through sun and shower, brightening all the dale  
 Of life with gladness—my beloved queen.  
 My heart as naught the troubled present deems—  
 I worship thee, sweet lady of my dreams!

In the sonnet "To L." it has been seen he could be bitter. He could also be sweet. And then, he had his moods of free laughter, as witness:

#### THE ASSISTANT CHEMISTRY MAN.

De chemistry 'sistant man, boss,  
 In chief is what I is,  
 I breshes de lab an' keeps it straight  
 An' tends to all de biz.

I likes to watch de gemmans work,  
 A-fiddlin' wif deir viles,  
 A-messin' roun' wif little pots  
 An' cur' some sorts of iles.



Dey mixes stuff in little chubes  
 An' puts it on to bile,  
 An' raises 'n awful mighty smell  
 In jest a little while.

Sometimes dey makes some big mistakes  
 An' mixes sump'n wrong,  
 An' den, crack-bang, jest see 'em jump!  
 De debbil's loose 'fore long.

For my part, I hain't got no time  
 To only more'n tell  
 Erbout dese iles whut eats your close  
 An' floors you wif deir smell.

'Deed, boss, I never teches 'em  
 Or takes 'em in my han'——  
 Huccum I needs to when I is  
 De 'sistant chemistry man?

But while Mills wrote for all the college publications and for outside newspapers, while he played tennis and politics, while he walked and dreamed, while he went through the usual strains and pains that drill the youthful heart to lasting loves, he never lost sight of the fact that the aim of his University years was to acquire an education. There are in existence many well-thumbed blank books full of his notes of lectures—English literature, history, philosophy, scientific branches. These cover his work both at the Oak Ridge Preparatory School and at the University. They show that faculty of seizing the “high lights” of any subject and the systematic array of material which made him later a good newspaper man. Industry and conscientiousness are written all over them.

His thesis in philosophy, dated April 28, 1906, has the odd form of a fictional narrative of the moral rescue of a young man of lax tendencies through grief and introspection. It was labeled *The Proving* and on the fly-



leaf Professor Williams made this endorsement: "The paper interests me. Add analysis to description. To do this, master Psychology. H. H. W." It is an interesting bit of psychology in itself, showing the domination of its author by the element of conscience, modified always by the love of life and joy of living.

There are also extant a number of the formal reports sent by the University authorities to his parents. The marks indicate high standing. On the report for 1903, Dean E. Alexander endorsed these words: "An excellent student;" in 1904, he wrote: "An uncommonly fine student;" in 1905, "A splendid report." The whole outcome of his academic work is summed up in the fact that when he graduated, he carried off with him a Phi Beta Kappa Key, the hallmark of American scholarship.

The graduation did not take place until June 4, 1907, five academic years from his entrance. The reason of this was that in January, 1904, while in the Sophomore class he had an attack of measles which had the common effect of leaving him with weakened eyes. On February 19, he wrote from Chapel Hill to his father at Statesville apropos of a breakdown in the health of his grandmother. After speaking of this, he goes on:

When I wouldn't agree to come home right after I got well—or rather got up, for I am still rather grouchy—I told you that I'd let you know if I had any trouble with my eyes. I have had none so far as pain is concerned. However, my eyes seem to be very much weaker than I thought they would be and than they appear to be. . . . Although they look about the same as ever, they run what seems to be merely water whenever I use them long enough to get up a lesson and it is impossible for me even to stay in a room with electric lights. These symptoms are more marked than they were early in the week.

Now it has taken a lot to make me arrive at this conclusion, **but** I have finally decided that I have no business at Chapel



Hill any longer. Although I have had only about half as much work as I carried before Christmas during the past week I have been unable to do it with any degree of benefit or satisfaction to myself. It therefore stands to reason that I will be unable to keep up my work later on. I think that you and Mother will agree with me. . . . It may be that if my glasses were refitted I might be able to stay here. However, I would have to take a risk that I am unwilling to take. There is only one experiment that will tell what is wrong and I am perfectly candid in saying that I am afraid to try it. That experiment is staying on here and working.

I will not worry over my hard luck. Everybody has to have a little. . . . It is mighty hard to pull out and leave but it is about the only sensible thing I can do. My time will not be thrown away as I want to go to work pretty soon and stay at it until I come back.

He went back in January, 1905, and had no more hard luck. In *Yackety-Yack* for 1907, he left a few lines which sparkle with the high spirits of the Commencement season:

#### A WISH.

When to reunion I return  
Just ten years from to-day  
I hope to find things just the same  
As when I went away,  
That to my comrades I may turn  
And, smiling, to them say:  
"Yes, everything is just the same—  
Same old campus, same old well,  
Same old jaybirds raising hell,  
You bet I'm glad I came!"

When the time for the reunion came, Mills was at Plattsburg working for his commission, and fully embarked in the great adventure which was at once the fruition and the sacrifice of all his years of preparation.



## CHAPTER IV

A BOLD STEP AND ITS SUCCESS—INGENUOUS BOHEMIANISM OF A YOUNG  
NEWSPAPERMAN IN NEW YORK—DEVELOPMENT OF A CRITICAL MIND  
—PLAYS, POLITICS AND PHILOSOPHY.

It has been seen that before his graduation Mills had made up his mind upon two points as respects his active life. He had decided to enter upon newspaper work either as a career or a stepping stone and he had resolved to make his start in New York. After Commencement in June, 1907, he went home to Statesville. He remained there all the summer, helping in his father's business and resting and building up his health. In September he was ready for the plunge.

No small courage was needed. He was already in debt for the greater part of the expenses of his college course and he was obliged to borrow again to cover the cost of his new expedition. He could have become at once the editor of the *Robesonian*, a weekly, published at Lumberton, Robeson County, N. C., or he could have had a position as reporter on the *Charlotte Observer*, then a very brilliantly edited and successful newspaper, for which he had already done much work in the line of special articles and news correspondence. The opening was a fair one, near home, and the pay would have been about as good as he could hope for as a beginner in New York. He could also have had a position as a reporter in Philadelphia. However, on New York his eyes were set and he was not to be turned aside from his plans or his ambitions.



The start seems to have been made on September 23 or 24, 1907. A letter written from Hamlet, North Carolina, is dated the 25th and shows that he had made some stop-over to attend to business for his father. He had been entertained by friends in Charlotte and expected to make other visits on his way to Norfolk, whither he was headed to take the steamboat for New York. He began to meet friends, college mates and others, on the train and this experience repeats itself again and again, through all his records down to the end in France. He took in the Jamestown Tri-Centennial Exposition, which was then in progress, but, on the whole, was bored by it—by all of it except the historical display. Arriving in New York on the 28th, he went directly to No. 115 Washington Place, a boarding and rooming house, kept by a Miss Jarmen.

This was by no means Mills's first experience in New York. In 1897, when he was thirteen years of age, his father had occasion to pass a winter there on business. Mrs. Mills and Quincy spent the months of January and February with him. Owing to the blindness of her mother, Mrs. Mills could not remain away from Statesville for a longer time. Again in 1905-6 Mr. Mills stayed for several months in New York and Quincy spent a month of his vacation in 1905 with him. Mrs. Mills, who also came North, remained with Mr. Mills until March, 1907. Then a tangle in business obliged them to return to Statesville, and they were there at the time of Quincy's graduation.

Among the acquaintances Mr. Mills made in New York in 1906 was that of Mr. John Doohan, a young Irishman who had lately arrived in New York from Hartford, Connecticut. Both were lonely; they became very good friends and he remained a frequent visitor of the family for several years. Mr. Mills wrote to him when Quincy was coming to New York about accommodations, and he



secured a room at Miss Jarmen's where he himself was staying. Mr. Doohan figures frequently in Quincy's letters as a sympathetic companion.

The story of Mills's early days, indeed of his first year in the big city, is told in his letters home, in which he gives ingenuously all the details of his life, his work and play, with many criticisms of men and things that reveal his expanding mind. Mr. Doohan steered him about the city and kept him from growing lonely. He spent just a few days in getting his bearings; then he addressed himself to the trying task of job hunting, as he called it. To aid in his quest, he had a number of introductions and recommendations. Mr. R. W. Vincent, the Managing Editor of the *Charlotte Observer*, sent him a personal letter of the friendliest kind, urging him to continue contributing, especially to the approaching Christmas issue, and enclosing a cordial endorsement, of which this is the text:

"CHARLOTTE, N. C., September 30, 1907.

*To Whom It May Concern:*

Mr. Quincy S. Mills, with whom the writer has been acquainted several years, possesses journalistic talent to a marked degree. During his career at the University of North Carolina, he served *The Observer* as news correspondent—the best the paper ever had at that institution—and was a frequent contributor to the Sunday issues. His articles have been widely read and admired, and critics have yielded to him literary ability of a high order. His most recent contribution to the paper, "Footing It Through the Blue Ridge," has excited universally favorable comment, and *The Observer* has never printed a more excellent narrative of adventure.

Mr. Mills is a conscientious student and a prolific writer. Personally he is a young man of irreproachable character and sterling worth. I esteem it a privilege to commend him to anyone seeking the service or companionship of a cultured



Christian gentleman and predict for him a brilliant future in the profession that he has chosen and which he will adorn.

ROBERT W. VINCENT,  
Managing Editor, *The Observer*.

Mills had, besides, letters to Mr. Ochs of the *Times* from Dean Alexander; to Mr. Ralph Graves and Mr. R. E. McAlarney, influential newspaper men, from Mr. Graves's brother, Louis; to Hammond Lamont from the late Professor Baskerville, recently of the New York City College but then of the North Carolina University, and to Mr. Jesse Lynch Williams and others from the Rev. LeRoy Gresham, Pastor of the Presbyterian church at Chapel Hill. It does not appear, however, that he presented any of these credentials. He went his own way about seeking employment. He marched into the newspaper offices and asked for an opportunity. On October 5, he wrote to his mother: "So far I have no job, but you are not to be discouraged by that. I am far from it." He had in fact secured a promise of a place on the *Times* whenever there should be a vacancy; it became a mere matter of waiting. He could have had an immediate opening in commercial lines, but decided to wait.

However, in an envelope postmarked October 7, 7:30 P.M., he characteristically enclosed a visiting card on one side of which was written:

Q. S. MILLS  
*The N. Y. Sun*  
*The Charlotte (N. C.) Observer*

This was on the other side:

Now comes the hardest part of all—making good. I will make good, or there will be no buttons not ripped off my pants. Love to Papa and yourself. Particulars later.

Q.



The card was not quite accurate. It was *The Evening Sun* and not *The Sun*—then a very important distinction—in whose service he had found a billet. He remained a member of its staff, latterly on leave of absence for duty in the war, to the day of his death, eleven years later.

In a letter dated October 8, he tells how it came about. He writes to his mother: "I guess you have sufficiently recovered from the first shock to take the rest of it. I had no other introduction than my nerve. I thought that, as I was going to use said nerve, I would strain it right at the start. Therefore I went down to Park Row." He went to the *Tribune* first and found "the boss" out at lunch, so he went next door to the little old redbrick building of *The Sun*. He was "turned down" by the City Editor of the great sheet, but went one flight up to the queer rookery in which at that period *The Evening Sun* was daily hatched. He says: "I blew in, pulled out my card with *The Charlotte Observer* inscribed thereon—and was accepted." He stated his case to Mr. Charles P. Cooper, the Managing Editor, showed Vincent's letter and said he was a Southerner, born and bred. "I was asked what I wanted. My reply was, 'A chance.' 'Well sir,' was the answer, 'you'll get it. Report at 8 o'clock to-morrow morning for work. Your salary will be fifteen dollars a week!' I'm here."

The next day, he writes again, telling of the wonder of his new companions as to how he did it. Mr. Cooper had "turned down" four applicants on the four preceding days. Mills concludes: "I guess I happened to strike him in the right mood and with the right impression." Mr. Cooper, who is now a professor in the Columbia University School of Journalism, being asked about the incident for the purposes of this book, wrote that he could not recall the particulars. He went on:



I will hazard the guess that it (his acceptance of Mills) was due to personality alone for in the old days we gave little heed to introductions. Mills very early made himself one of the "good men" and our relations from first to last were most cordial. I treasure to this day a card which came to me at the *Times* office, while the war was on, from Mills. Our paths had taken different directions for a long time and I had no idea that he ever had me in mind, when this card reached me bearing friendly greetings from the war area in France. It was only a little later when the news reached us that he had perished. With all of his former associates, I cherish his memory.

From his commencement of work, many of his letters are written on "copy paper," some in pencil, scribbled between jobs of news getting and writing. Cub reporters were cheap in those days, but it is astonishing how much the boy did with that fifteen dollars a week. He assured his parents that his pay card would not long remain at that small figure.

However, for the moment, his anxiety was not as to a raise but to hold the job he had so boldly won. He watched the first and second week's pay days with acute misgivings and many succeeding ones with a gradually diminishing nervousness. He was as modest an adventurer as ever braved fortune with his pen in a New York newspaper office. But, in fact, he was never in any danger. Everybody liked him. The copy desk gave him reassuring hints; people higher up threw him words of encouragement; his comrades chummed with him and exhorted him to courage. At first he rewrote items from the morning papers and the like; soon he began to take "stories" over the telephone and write them for publication; he was quite cheered up to see how little doctoring his copy needed. Then he was sent out after news, a large fire in Jersey City, for instance, and a run on a trust



company—these were days of panic—and to get interviews. Several mild compliments followed such experiments on the score of his thoroughness and accuracy in getting facts. One day he handed in a sketch to Cooper who read it, chewed his moustache and remarked: "Young man, you're like all Southerners, you slop over; but you've put a touch in here that is all your own." Mills sends home the compliment with great elation, adding: "Not bad as a starter and the sting wasn't in the tail."

Then came the day—it was February 16, 1908—when he was sent down to Wall Street to cover the Curb Market. This meant no raise of pay, but the duty required great exactitude. The assignment showed that he had inspired confidence in the office. He enjoyed the experience, including the first glance it gave him at the big men in finance. He almost resented the slight amount of real work to be done, but balanced up with a resolution to write fiction and sketch stuff for the famous "back page" of the paper. Some six weeks later, he had an experience to which nearly all young newspapermen are exposed in one shape or form. He writes:

Could have added a neat little wad to my salary this month had I seen fit. I handle the curb stock reports and a representative of a certain firm slipped \$25 into my hand the other day. He nearly fainted when I handed it back and told him that I didn't happen to have any price. . . . I needed the money all right, in fact on the very day it was offered I had a peculiarly subtle influence at work on me that might have made the chance a temptation. Isn't it strange how things always seem to hit at the very centre of a fellow's weak spots? Well, I may always be short of cash but I will always be able to look myself in the face.

All along, while doing his day's work for *The Evening Sun*, a nominal eight hours but often more, he kept on



working for the *Charlotte Observer*. He sent special articles, New York news and gossip and Christmas matter. The resulting checks were not large but with their aid he paid \$125 on December 17, 1907, on account of his note at the First National Bank of Statesville, which had provided for his early New York expenses. He renewed for \$100. Besides this process of "paying for the dead horse" he made some savings out of his salary. How he did it may seem puzzling in post-bellum days of high living cost, but he paid moderately for his room, took his meals at cheap places—after a while boarded at Miss Jarmen's—and made the outfit that he brought from home last through his period of strain. Withal, he lived neither a narrow nor an uninteresting life. Besides his writing and much reading he amused himself in many ways. He had all New York to roam about and he did so, learning the city journalistically. He went to theatres, concerts, the opera. He attended several dinners, including one, very early, of the University Alumni at the Café Boulevard on Second Avenue, at which he made a speech that was applauded. He had many friends and paid some social visits, but, it must be admitted, as few as he possibly could.

All these doings, mixed up with stray bits of his work, and all colored by his hopes and his fears, his homesickness and his will to win, he flashes through those home letters. There is no trace of literary effort, but something far more vivid in the careless, natural revelation of himself, the unconscious intimacy of detail, the frank assumption of an interested and affectionate enjoyment of his confidences on the part of those to whom they were made. The hasty but pointed periods are instinct with youth and hope and the joy of life. He was forming his mind and his taste, too, and he plunged into criticism of all sorts with refreshing frankness. He was by no means always right. Many



an opinion of those days he would have laughed at a few years later, but he was always interesting and generally had a reason, even though not over sound, to give for his faith.

A few excerpts from these living documents will best serve to illustrate what he was and how he spent his days. While he is still wondering as to how he came to land in his job, he writes:

Have not been out much at night. Saw the Hippodrome show and Nazimova in *The Master Builder* all in the first week that I was here. Those things don't attract me as they used to [alluding probably to his earlier New York visits] and I find that I am very ready to rest when I get in, although I don't seem to do enough to tire an infant. Doohan is good company and I like him a whole lot. We smoke, play casino, or go out for a glass of beer together every evening. Never before have I had impressed on me so forcibly that man is a sociable animal. I feel the need of company in this town.

He was not really *blasé* as to shows, as will appear. He was, however, lonely in the crowd. He longed for the family circle. The sensation of doing too little work soon wore off. They kept him pretty busy at the office and he began pleading this condition as an excuse for laxity in writing, which, in fact, was never perceptible. The Alumni dinner seems to have been on the evening of October 12. It was a highly "expansive" affair, with thirty eight banqueters, but Mills did not "go up in the air" even when Judge Van Wyck, who presided, called on "Q. S. Mills of the New York *Sun*, one of the latest to enter our ranks." "You can bet," he writes, "that I was surprised and nervous, but I got up and decided that I had to be game for the sake of '07. I told them a few things about the new university." On this occasion, he felt truly at home. He knew many of the party and one or two were



real friends. He was complimented on his speech. "Maybe," he remarks, "it was the wine that was talking." His next dinner, about a month later, was a Y. M. C. A. affair and much "drier" if not less "expansive." He went as a reporter but enjoyed it hugely. He comically represented that it took several days to recover an appetite after it, the eating was so prodigious, in the absence of drinking. A third feast was that of the Tennessee Society at the Waldorf—a great event. "Bob Taylor put up a spiel that was worth hearing. We had Southern music and Southern grub—in so far as a French chef could be considered capable of preparing it. While the drinkables weren't moonshine cocktails, they were all right; no 'water in glasses tall!' "

He sent clippings home of his work, good straightaway reporting as it appeared in the paper, and others of many things of interest to the home folk. Musical and dramatic news and criticism were most in favor, and presently his own views in these lines begin to occupy a large space in the letters, especially those addressed to his mother. The amount he wrote and clipped on these topics seems at first sight out of proportion, but Mrs. Mills explains: "The reason Quincy wrote so much about plays and operas was that we had gained at home from books and magazines a satisfying knowledge of pictures and sculpture. But plays and operas must be seen and heard to be understood and appreciated. For this reason, when we isolated Southerners come to New York, we have to satisfy a lifetime hunger for these forms of mind food. It is impossible for one who has always lived here to realize the keen freshness of our interest."

The *Observer* Christmas stories, of which he wrote two long ones, kept him severely tied down until the middle of November. Then he began a course of theatre going. He saw *The Merry Widow*—"par, perhaps," he comments—



*Erminie*,—"pretty good." Oddly, he found little catchy music in them; only the too, too well-known waltz in the former aroused his enthusiasm. He went back to hear it several times, and, again and again, names it but to praise. One letter in January, 1908, he devotes mainly to his theatregoing. On the whole, he says, it "has not given me as much pleasure as I had anticipated." He thinks there were no musical shows equal to *Fantana*, that now forgotten favorite of a season, and music was the thing he most loved. However, he found Anna Held in *The Parisian Model*, was "very good in a sensuous sort of way." He had a windfall in the Aborn Opera Company at the Lincoln Square Theatre—*Fra Diavolo* and *The Chimes of Normandy* in English at popular prices. Estelle Wentworth, "who has a remarkably clear voice," caught his fancy.

But "the climax of the musical hash" came when he got "office tickets" for a Saturday night performance at the Metropolitan Opera House. The opera was *Aida*. The naïve boyishness of his account of it is worth quoting pretty fully:

To say that I enjoyed myself would be putting it very mildly, and it wasn't a case of grand opera rave either. I went expecting to be bored and well bored, but had a pleasant surprise. The opera is so totally different from what I expected that it took me right away. Gadske had the leading rôle, and while hers was the only voice that pleased me especially—the only one good enough to make up by fullness of tone and expression for the "Greek" of the words—the whole thing was so splendidly staged that I was amazed. The ballets were really worth while, and the instrumental music throughout could not be improved upon; it is simply perfect. These things alone pleased me, for the opera as a piece of literature is decidedly ordinary. It seemed to me a perfect anti-climax. This effect may have been produced by the less satisfying



quality of the music in the last act. . . . In minor details, some things enlightened me. I did not know that the Egyptian priestesses wore knee skirts and silk tights and adorned their *blonde curls* with picture hats with ostrich plumes. But they were good to look at so I pardoned Conried.

He kept on going to the opera. On January 28, he saw *Faust* and enjoyed it "immensely," Dippel had the title part. Mills says nothing of him but rates Chaliapine as the star of the evening, "the critics to the contrary, notwithstanding." He goes on: "In comparison with *Aida*, *Faust* is more satisfying to me as a dramatic work, but its music is hardly so impressive, and its staging far less elaborate and striking. I cannot conceive a piece of staging more splendid than that of the triumphal scene in *Aida*." Of *Carmen*, he writes a little later:

It is the best that I have seen in the grand opera line, so far. The cast included some unusually good singers for a popular price performance. [It was at Hammerstein's.] Calve herself would have to do some hard work to surpass Bressler-Gianoli. She was perfect as the cigarette girl. Mme. Zeppili, the little woman right under her on the bill of fare, had about the sweetest, clearest soprano that it has ever been my lot to hear. Dalmores was good; so was Gilibert, so was Trentini—and, best of all, they suited their parts and could act. Grand opera to reach its perfection must be acted as well as sung. When they put a big beef of a woman into Camille's part in *La Traviata* as they did at the Metropolitan on Saturday night, it took all the heart out of the play for me. I have read *Camille* and have very decided ideas as to the personality of the slender little slip of the Parisian understratum—who was never so bad in my eyes anyway—and when they put in her shoes a big woman that could chew up a beefsteak, offhand, and made her attempt to pass off from consumption, the result was simply heartrending. True — [Needless to specify the great artiste he was lampooning] has a



voice remarkable for its range and power, but what's the use?

At last he heard Caruso and he gives a good bit of space to him in a letter written, March 2, although he begins: "From my standpoint, there isn't much to tell." It was again his theatrical taste that was offended. His ear and his eye were at odds. The great tenor's anatomy did not suit Mills. The opera was *Il Trovatore* and he was disappointed in it too, in spite of Owen Meredith's superlative. "It can't approach *Carmen*," he writes, adding naïvely that "the duet, the *Miserere* and the *Anvil Chorus* were by far the best parts; but they were not up to what I had hoped. Mme. Eames sang with Caruso and to my mind beat him."

His devotion to music was not confined to the Opera. He went to the Hippodrome frequently on Sunday nights, he sampled the Philharmonic and other orchestras and he heard *The Creation* sung at Carnegie Hall and enjoyed it. But his taste was still in the formative stage. He goes back to *Carmen* to express surprise that his mother did not care for it. It was the Toreador's song that hit him hard; he pronounces it "the catchiest air I have struck up with in some moons." He "carried it away" with him on one hearing—he had probably heard it often, as a popular selection—and he thought that wonderful, as his ear was not quick. Incidentally, in another letter he defines his musical state exactly. He had gone to see an armory review of the Twenty-second Regiment, New York State National Guard, which he describes as "the most effective military event I have had the pleasure of witnessing." He goes on: "The music added not a little to the spectacle, for it was good music of the sort I really believe I appreciate best—along with the remainder of the *canaille*—military music."



"Being in thirst for something light after such heavy feed [as *Trovatore*]  
—an elegant term to apply to Grand Opera—and out to hunt for relaxation," he went to hear the *Waltz Dream*, and this brings out another aspect of his character. He writes of it:

It's a dream all right, a nightmare, in fact. If anybody had told me that respectable folk, even in New York, would support so uselessly vulgar a production I would not have believed it. People that will stand for this sort of thing and then bray at Shaw are beyond my ken. . . . The first act in the breadth of the suggestion of its lines would justify a Zulu chief in running it out of an African jungle. But Broadway whoops and cheers at it, and the women seem to get the most fun of all out of the ill-smelling attempts at humor that endeavor to say everything that can be said, with the least possible veil of propriety.

God help the stage if this is the sort of thing the public is going to yell for and playwrights are going to turn out in the future, while Shaw and Ibsen are set back as immoral. Incidentally it is hardly worth while for actors and actresses to kick at the disfavor in which their profession is held when they consent to produce such stuff.

The young man who wrote this—he was about twenty-five—was neither a prig nor a prude. Simply, he had a standard of public taste and morals. His sympathy for the Traviata has appeared. A couple of weeks before his *Waltz Dream* anger, he had something to say about the Thaw case in answer to some remark of his mother's. He finds a degree of condonement for Stanford White's share in the plot in that "he did something positive for American art to counterbalance his negative influence morally." "The woman in the case," he adds, "has attracted me pretty much as she has everyone. I don't blame her so hardly for going back that second time to White"—with much more that is kindly and in the spirit of the most



famous judgment of such cases by the greatest Judge of all.

Young Quincy could be gay enough on occasion even to the borderline of the *risqué*. He has in one place a description of the New York spring breezes in which he grows almost as sportive as they are wont to be:

There is a blast from the north howling about the eaves. It has been cutting capers in the streets and around the corners. I'll venture to bet that every maiden in New York put on her clockworks when she arrayed herself in her Sunday finery this morning—just so as to be on the safe side if anything happened. Not that anything was going to happen, but, then, one never can tell; gusts are so very tricky and so very much given to surprising one—and others—at the most unexpected moments, that it is, after all, best to be on the safe side. Then when one has taken all the precautions, and done all one can to—well, to mitigate the calamity, and, after all, nothing, not even so much as a discreet flurry does dash at one, can one really be blamed for feeling just a wee bit miffed at old Boreas? It could not have been one's fault; had it happened for how could one have prevented it and others would not have cared.

Boyish fun and animal spirits, quite innocent but not exactly puritanical! But the mind of twenty-five often turned toward the complementary human element. Besides sundry family friends, other feminine wraiths flit through the letters. He saw a *Sun* typewriter girl put her arm around the neck of an extra sized Maltese in the counting room and concluded that it must be the far-famed "Office Cat." The girl was pretty; she hugged the sleek animal. "Have been endeavoring to meet said typewriter girl ever since, for I like cats, and, with so much in common, she might—well, it's an awfully fine Sunday and I'm going for a walk." Very early in his career, after reporting a charity conference he writes:



"Had company, lots of it, in the shape of about twenty-one years of girl, good looking girl, who is reporter for the ——. We took lots of notes and when I got back to the shop I found lots of marks of the meaning of which I hadn't even the suggestion of an idea." The same—or was it another?—very good looking girl reporter figured largely in his life for several years. His comrades thought it looked serious. It might have been, but Fate willed it otherwise. In fact it may be said of Mills at this period (as of most young fellows of his age) that he sometimes neglected "to be off with the old love before he was on with the new."

Besides going to the opera and otherwise cultivating music, Mills became a great playgoer. He shared the pleasure and instruction he derived with the people at home, chiefly in letters to his mother. The first play he mentions is *Candida*, "the most satisfying thing in the dramatic line that I have taken a look at so far." There is, however, no clue as to what else he had then seen except musical comedies. "I nearly hurt myself laughing at Prossy," he goes on, "and the old gentleman whose name, according to my normal forgetfulness, I cannot lay hold of"—no doubt Burgess. "I listened with sincere interest to every line of the play; it is the best of Shaw's that I have seen and, after seeing it, I, at least, am sure that he knew what he was talking about when he said that he could write better plays than Shakespeare. He can in one sense, because he is a twentieth-century dramatist, dealing with twentieth-century life. But in some ways Bill has him beat several laps still." Mills himself, it may be observed, was very twentieth-century.

He next praises *The Witching Hour* and its star, John Mason. The theme of the play, telepathy, gripped his attention. "Augustus Thomas," he comments, "got a good steed but rode it till it was windbroke and weak at



the knees." He thought the occult element was so overdone as to provoke a smile. He decided that with experience and the material he could have turned out a better play. Yet, he concludes, it was "one of the most effective I have seen and I wouldn't take a lot for the pleasure I got out of it." Then he does some classification: "Of the other dramas I have seen *The Man of the Hour*, *Anna Karenina*, *The Master Builder*, *A Doll's House*, *Lear* and *Macbeth* have been first class; *The Lion and the Mouse*, and *The Rose of the Rancho* passable, while *The Thief* proved no special excuse for its existence, so far as I could see."

*The Reckoning* with its curtain raiser, *The Literary Sense*, he found "more Ibsenish than Ibsen." He thought Miss Katherine Gray, who was featured in them, "at the top of the list of emotional actresses, but Mme. Nazimova's name must be written on the line just above hers. Her emotion is a little too much of the physical; Nazimova catches you with the mental side of her work and knows just how much reserve her lines will stand."

Then he saw Mr. Sothern in *Hamlet* and a great and growing admiration set in. He says the interpretation of the character was "identical with the way I had learned to read the play, but he added some things I hadn't been deep enough to pick out of it." He liked *Lord Dundreary* much less, but he is almost rhapsodical over *If I Were King*—"about the most perfect drama I have ever seen. After seeing Sothern as Villon, I am satisfied he is a great actor. He plays the part as if he gloried in it. His supporters fit their places as if made for them. I am going to see it again. The lyrics in the book are exquisite, and Sothern renders them just right."

He also went to see Mr. Henry Ludlowe as Shylock but the portrayal did not satisfy him, though he confessed himself unable to assign a reason. One more stage experi-



ence: "I went to see Olga Nethersole do Sapho; I wanted to see how the book staged. It's not so bad and could be made really very good if properly dramatized. But Olga is impossible. Sapho is a distinctly disreputable person, but she is to be preferred to affectation. I was satisfied, however, for I got some pointers." Those interested in psychological oddities may be interested in comparing this with some other criticisms quoted.

Music and the theatre were not Mills's only interests of the intellectual kind. There are several mentions of visits to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, including one to the exposition of the works of St. Gaudens; but there is neither description nor comment. His mother's explanation as to dramatics, no doubt, applies. Of books and concern in books there are innumerable passages, some of them extended. Sometimes discussion arose through his mother and himself reading a book simultaneously and exchanging views, as in the case of *The Shuttle*, Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett's novel of international marriages and the interweaving of American and European stock, which had just then been published. "I agree with you," he writes, "that the first part of the book is superior—in some ways. It is the analysis of character in this section that makes it so worth while. The delineation is unusually good, but a trifle drawn out at times. The latter third is much more dramatic in incident—don't you think so?—and is considerably more rapid in movement. . . . In places it is very strong and impresses you with its reality. The book should stage well although it might have to be altered materially." He stayed at home every evening for a week to read it. He finally pronounces it "a wonderfully pleasing and satisfying book for a modern novel." Undoubtedly its political or sociological aspects appealed to him very keenly. But Mrs. Mills is authority, as has appeared, for the belief that Mrs. Burnett was



one of two or three contemporary novelists in whose work he took an unflagging interest. He read very many of her works.

Another admirable novel which appeared about the same time aroused both his interest and his analytical powers. This was DeMorgan's *Alice for Short*. He is both appreciative and somewhat unfair in his criticism of it. He was on the waiting list for five weeks at a library—which he calls “the little library on Thirteenth Street”—before he got it, so, one evening, he could not “resist the temptation to see what it was like even if the library card did come just on the heels of a resolve to get very busy,” writing special newspaper stuff. Then, “after one found what it was like, how could one stop reading until one had finished the very last page, even if it took one until 1:30 on Sunday morning?” He spent all his spare time for a week on it. He writes:

After reading it, I feel as if I had been delving for days in some old garret, among haircloth trunks and musty lace and faded silks of long ago. It is a rare sensation and is distinctly worth while. If I could only enjoy it every week I believe I would be willing to forego my desire to grind out copy of my own just to give way to the enjoyment.

Not that I have no flaw to find in this fine tale of orphan and artist—and cats. Of course there is no trouble in understanding why the book appealed so directly to your heart; anything so permeated with an atmosphere of cats was bound to capture you [himself equally, of which more presently]; but frankly, I cannot help nourishing a grudge against my friend DeMorgan because it is an absolute impossibility for me ever to find the young lady with the tantalizing scar “just around where folk kiss you.” I fear it will be some time before I cease examining every girl whom I meet to see whether or not there is a scar just around where she should be kissed. . . . Of course, Alice is his best creation and I'll wager that, if he has a wife who has not a scar on her cheek, she is keeping a sharp



lookout for some woman who has. This is only another way of saying that DeMorgan was sorry he couldn't marry her himself before he got through with his book.

Charles is the second best and Peggy third in the scale of portraiture, but there are any number of smaller parts mightily clear cut. In fact, viewing this man's characters collectively, it is easy to see that he went on the trail of Thackeray, as he indicates himself by his comparison of Lavinia to Becky Sharpe, when he dipped his pen into the inkpot. [A curious theory this, in view of the general and much shallower comparison of DeMorgan with Dickens.] For my part I think he goes Thackeray one better in the way that he keeps the little intimate things of everyday life always next your heart; but his characters in the large have not the strength of his master's. I would rather read *Alice for Short* than *The Newcomes*. Thackeray's observance of details is too dry; the younger writer's is more folksy and absorbing. Did it occur to you that in the book as a whole there was an unusual dearth of detailed place description?

To get on to Alice and Charles—she is not to be forgotten, but one could remember her with more pleasure if she had been less sufficient at all points. She would have been enough as a very sensible and lovable young woman. She had her hands full accomplishing that without becoming an authoress, considering her parentage. That is where DeMorgan fell down. He should have left out the literary achievement—and the cigarettes. The fact is he felt so enthused over her that he came to believe her capable of anything. But why spoil the scar with the cigarette? He could have made Alice unconventional without it. I do not like women who smoke cigarettes. And, finally, why had Alice to be illegitimate? There, she was punished with something she did not deserve.

Passing on to Charles, I must say I never went into raptures over him at any stage. His saving grace was that he liked cats. True, the author does not explicitly state that he liked them, but he must have. One of my reasons for disliking his make-up is that in his idle brush and maul stick I see considerable similarity to my pen. And in the end he got more



than was coming to him; a girl like Alice deserved a more positive character. I have a slight notion that your advice to me with regard to reading this book may have been prompted by a resemblance—in some ways, at least—that you perceived between the painter and myself. Come now, Mother, haven't I caught you! . . . But I like, especially, DeMorgan's use of "preparation," with which, as a requisite of composition, you are somewhat acquainted.

Mills also gives some attention to G. B. S.'s early skit, *Cashel Byron's Profession*, which he read on a Sixth Avenue car and "ensconced on a quiet bench" in Central Park. On it he makes one acute criticism: "Chiefly, he falls down in that he fails to establish a single character that is a character from back to back." This is a discovery of the fatal weakness of all Shaw's ventures in fiction.

Books and their contents played a large part in his life. One night, "one of the boys" from the office called in to see him. He had to be entertained. "I started in on him with poetry," says Mills, "and read him everything, from Browning to selections from *Life*. He became properly nauseated and hasn't recovered yet. But I forgot to mention that he tried to smoke a cigar a little stronger than he was."

All this time Mills was longing for his own books which were down in Statesville. He was lonely without them and broaches the subject of having them sent to him, again and again. In general, uncertainty as to whether he would change rooms or not held him back; then, he did not want his mother to have the trouble of packing them and his father was too ill; he was always thinking of someone else's interests. At last, he compromised on a bundle, and these are the books he asked to have put into it: Browning, Wundt's *Principles of Morality* and his set of Shakespeare. He explains, "I am sure they will enable



me to spend some hours with satisfaction to myself and my pocketbook."

But, as the springtime came on, there was an appeal to him in the open air that perhaps only those who grew up in the country can realize and beside which all indoor attractions paled. On March 15, a Sunday, he writes:

The past few days have been too good to be true. I am now seated in my palatial apartment with my one window wide open and no fire, and the temperature is precisely right. How I would like to have a chance at a few days of the springtime down home now! I didn't know before that I could really miss birds and flowers to such a degree. It doesn't seem right not to be able to get a smell of the woods. I have been consoling myself these bright days by strolling down to the seawall during my odd minutes and watching the ships lying along the docks. In the bustle and noise and the strange odors mixed with the taste of the salt in the air and the curious people one sees there, there is much to take one out of oneself as the awakening of the year does at home, although not in so delicate a way. There is an element of undisguisable curiosity in the feeling here, and curiosity is always vulgar.

A few lines further on, he says: "The past week was a record breaker with me. I did not go out to a single show. Somehow I couldn't get interested in running around; it seemed to be too nice to be able to stay at home when I had the chance."

In spite of a good deal of show going, his home, solitary though it was, remained a primary interest. Indeed his life was made up principally of his work and his home, and the former was to a large extent the reason for the shows. His "job" on *The Evening Sun* became more and more exacting and he constantly wrote outside matter. Relaxation was imperative. His day began at 5 A.M. for many weeks; at six he was at the office; he was on duty always for eight "rarely for ten" hours; usually he got lunch,



sometimes not. When he reached home, he was ready for a nap and often slept for two to four hours before dinner. "When I have been in the office most of the day," he says, "it pays me to get out and walk after dinner. Otherwise I am apt to lie awake when I turn in for my second bout of sleep after midnight." Sometimes, instead, he went home "for a good quiet smoke and a bit of reading. But I like to go to shows pretty often and have seen nearly two a week for my time here. It is about my only form of dissipation and I think it will repay me from a financial standpoint later. As Sunday is the only morning I can sleep, I bury my alarm clock in my trunk Saturday night and it is usually more the afternoon than the morning that I open my eyes on, catching up on all the sleep I have lost the week before."

Later still he took up bowling; he had acquired some skill in the game at Statesville. Now he found it necessary to preserve the balance between physical and mental exercise. "Have been dreadfully sore," he writes after beginning practice, "but am satisfied that it is needed. May not become a Samson, but I will get a good deal harder in muscle, something I need." In 1909, when he had more funds, he joined the gymnasium classes of the Washington Heights Y. M. C. A. He found such exercise absolutely necessary in order to keep fit. He kept it up until he entered the training camp at Plattsburg in 1917. There it proved its value when he took up the hard work of marching and drilling and bayonet practice. Though slight in frame, he was wiry and supple and always kept himself physically at top notch.

Of his quarters on Washington Place, he speaks with enjoyment. The fare agreed with him and the people were amusing, including some Greeks who "raved in pages from Sophocles," a sculptor who played the flute and a blonde widow with a couple of frigid daughters. "I like



some of the crowd," he tells his mother, but, undoubtedly, his great attraction was Thomas the cat, who seems at first to have been a furtive denizen of the kitchen shadows, but through his influence became a prime favorite of the upstairs regions before he departed. They had their differences like all true friends, but Thomas came to fill an intimate and empty spot in Mills's heart. There had always been pets at Statesville. The cat purring on his childish knees, while his mother read aloud, will be remembered. Enter the boarding house favorite:

Tom is seated blissfully on my sofa pillow in comfortable proximity to the gas stove, and is enjoying an extra degree of contentment after a feast of chicken bones over in the corner. We have got thicker and thicker, have Tom and I, with much addition to our common happiness. If he does not accompany me upstairs when I come in, he usually wanders up and applies his voice to the chinks of my door some time before morning, if he is in the house. He has reached the point of taking absolute possession when he comes in, and sulks if I don't give him everything he demands. His usual roost for the night is under the comfort on my bed, where he serves in the capacity of a foot warmer and music box as well. It makes him very irate if I do any kicking around after I get under cover. If I do disturb his position, he growls and tackles the offending limb through the covers most ferociously. As he makes a comfortable plaster for a cold back, I generally keep still. I don't know what I'd do without him now. He is such good company.

Then he tells of Thomas's kittenish rejuvenation over a catnip ball and he sends one home for the family cats. Presently, by way of joke, he tipped Thomas into the washstand and shut him in. A dazed cat emerged and began hunting for the enemy who had so betrayed him, never suspecting the half-repentant Mills. A long and detailed account of an act of performing cats at the



Hippodrome follows. He bombarded his mother with cat postal cards—photographs of fancy cats, cat valentines and cat comedy sketches—his love of cats and other animals was overflowing. He got soaked “to the bone” reporting a workhorse parade in a torrential rain, but he didn’t mind a bit; “it was worth it to see the horses. You [his mother] would have liked to be there.”

At last, indeed, he was forced to quarrel with Thomas for room in the bed for his toes, which the amiable brute tried to mangle with teeth and claws. However, after some discipline in outer darkness on the chilly stairs there was a reconciliation. “We have become an established institution in this house,” he sums up; “and he is referred to as my ‘gentleman friend.’ Really he has come to take up a large per cent. of the conversation at meal times and is considered as equal to any of the rest of the white folk.” At one time, he says, he has discussed with Thomas the proposition of moving to Harlem and taking him along whenever he went there and Thomas cordially consented. But, when the time came, he changed his mind. Thomas was established in comfort at Miss Jarmen’s and he would not risk bringing him among strangers, where he might not be appreciated or welcomed. They all wanted to keep him in the old place, “so you see my time has not been entirely wasted here in Manhattan, for I have made Tom a fixture at 115.”

The holidays did not affect the tenor of Mills’s way to any great extent. He chose them as days to write home and his mind dwelt much on the old times in Statesville. He had to work on Thanksgiving day so he was not lonely. He and Doohan feasted at a restaurant and he found much to be thankful for, including the fact that his father and mother “were having a pleasant day out in N. C.” He had so good a dinner that he dwells on the prolonged distention of his waistband. It was seasoned with “some



good laughs" and after it he walked down Sixth Avenue home, reflecting gratefully: "I have my job, while lots of poor fellows are getting down and out since money has grown so scarce." He realized that his position was growing strong on *The Evening Sun* and he encloses the clipping of a story which made him feel "mighty good" because "most of the men in the office submitted Thanksgiving stories and mine was the only one used." The heading of the story was *Coon Landed in the Punch-bowl—But It Recalled Old-Time Thanksgiving Hunt—So the Major Didn't Mind*. It was a spirited sketch of Southern life of about fifteen hundred words.

Christmas day was another occasion for letter writing. The celebration began the evening before when he and two other reporters went to Madame Volanti's on Eleventh street—cherished resort of young and economical Bohemia. "There, with our feet in the sawdust and our heads full of *vino* we had a very large Christmas eve. After dinner I came home and read *The Scarlet Letter!*" Evidently the *vino* was moderate in quality and quantity. To get rid of lonesomeness he went out walking at 11 o'clock and met two college mates "neither of whom I had any idea was within five hundred miles of New York." They "made a bright streak along Broadway" but got home safe though late. The day brought another University friend and the best dinner money could buy with him and Doohan. New Year's Day was marked by only two resolutions: to write fewer letters and sleep more—both of which he renewed frequently, but neither of which he kept.

He also spent his twenty-fourth birthday, January 15, 1908, alone in the big city. The previous day, he wrote: "I am sure that I am much younger to-day than when I came to New York City. Pretty old, though, it seems for a fellow just starting out in life with the foundation to lay still and everything to make. But it might be worse.



My start is at least not discouraging." He touches again on the subject of his age in a letter written just a month later and speaks of himself, oddly, as "almost twenty-five." He adds, "not so many years, but probably half of the number that will be allotted to me." He could have no vision then that he had hardly more than ten ahead of him, nor of the great cause that was to make his death a greater achievement than his life.

During all these months when he walked the ways of a young Bohemian and gradually assimilated the manners of the city and the technics of his craft, his heart was never wholly detached from the scenes of his childhood and youth. His longing for the woods, and birds and flowers has been seen. His letters are full of affectionate recollections of home. His faith as a *Tar Heel* was also quite invincible. He met all sorts of North Carolinians, exiles like himself, and his interest in them was vivid. One of them, Charles Katzenstein by name, was a post-graduate student at Columbia, and in March took part in an inter-collegiate debate:

Well, Katzenstein lost out, but it was his team-mate's fault; he did more than his part. I certainly felt proud that a North Carolina man could make such a show against men from big universities. He was about the best on deck. . . . Neither the Columbia nor the Pennsylvania team put up such a debate as a Carolina pair can. U. N. C. may be a little place and tucked into the backwoods but it is not without its uses just the same.

A visit made by Rae Logan to New York in June was a gala event. They had a rollicking time which included everything from the Metropolitan Museum to Coney Island and the Bronx Zoo. It was all too short to suit Mills. Yet they went such a pace of sightseeing that Quincy wrote to his mother on a picture postal card:



"Rae left this morning. It was a pretty good thing for me. We ran ourselves about to death and he didn't have to go to work. That last night at Coney was a dazzler." He tells his mother that he sits down and goes through his *Landmark*, the Statesville newspaper, first thing on its arrival. This is evident all through the letters as he many times comments sympathetically on the personal news he finds in it, as also that conveyed in his mother's letters. Many of these expressions are too intimate for quotation. All show strong family attachment and warm sentiments toward old friends, also, perhaps, an occasional dash of acidity as regards persons not so regarded. One passage may be given for the sake of its revelation of his own attitude on the most vital of all questions. The letter is undated, but is postmarked March 9, 1908. He writes:

After your apprising me of his condition I was not surprised to learn of Mr. Dowd's death. How sorry I feel for "Miss Fannie." When people are happy together, how unjust it seems that they should be parted, but I believe that is usually the way. Why must everybody be always unhappy? Peace seems denied to all alike. The threadbare explanation of original sin doesn't appeal to me. There is too much of such stuff in religion—or dogma, rather—as people make it. Omar's view,

What, by his helpless creature be repaid  
Pure gold for what he lent him dross allayed!

And so on, appeals to me much more just here.

The love of family and home gives tone and color to every experience. His watchful care as to his parents, his desire for a resumption of the old united life assert themselves over and over again. His father's health was not good at this time and he repeatedly urged an operation



that promised to effect a cure. He returns to the subject at every opportunity. Finally his advice was taken with the happiest results. The operation was performed without any forewarning to him in order to spare him anxiety. His reply to the letter telling of its success was a cry from the heart, compounded of simple affection and optimistic good sense, though he was reproachful over the concealment.

His father's Statesville business also gave him concern and he advised that advantage be taken of a prosperous period to dispose of it and transfer the headquarters of the family permanently to New York. His advice was finally adopted, but before that came to pass, Quincy himself made not one, but two flittings. The heat and noise and swelter of lower New York became intolerable to him in May, and he took a room at No. 353 West 119th Street, in a pleasant house kept by a Mrs. Collins. He had a larger and better furnished room at a small increase of cost. "I got out," he says. "The purpose hit me one day, and I moved the next." His friend Katzenstein was already there. "You cannot imagine what a difference there is in the noise," he writes; and again: "The feel of the air is an encouragement to work in itself."

Of course, he became interested in all the cats of the neighborhood. The neatly sodded and planted backyards were a feast to his eye in contrast with the antiquated squalor of Washington Place and vicinity. He took lively notice of the ways of the surrounding population, especially the "free vaudeville show" furnished nightly "long about bedtime" by an unconscious young lady across the block until a spontaneous burst of applause from some young fellows caused her to pull down the blinds. In these letters of Mills's not only his own life but the everyday incidents of all life in New York stand out with realistic vividness.



The only drawback to the new quarters seems to have been a plague of mosquitoes that year. He describes Harlem as smelling like "a colossal joss-house" because of the incense sticks that girls wore in their hair and everyone carried about to ward them off, and in spite of which "staccato whacks constantly resounded through the evening air." However, he was utterly tired of boarding house experience. He had had four years of it at Chapel Hill as a prelude to almost a year in New York. He now determined on a totally new experiment and with a friend, a young New Englander, a civil engineer and a graduate of Cornell, he took, on August 1, a small apartment at No. 161 Manhattan Avenue, where he remained until the complete reunion of the family in October.

The apartment was sublet, furnished, and, of course, there was a cat, Buster, "whom" Perry, the Cornell man, did not appreciate as much as Mills. There was a complete kitchen and the two cooked their own meals. Mills reveled in their bills of fare, one of which he gives: "broiled steak (best sort), baked potatoes, toast, tomatoes, lettuce, milk, tea, crullers and fruit." He further explains: "We vary every night. Sometimes our *pièce de résistance* is pork chops, again it is sausage or fish. We have fried potatoes, with onions to match, egg toast, etc. The only rule of the house is that whoever mentions boiled potatoes or pot roast gets pitched down the dumbwaiter shaft." This was, of course, an anti-boarding house reaction. They "started dinner after six and had the dishes stacked by eight," so the evening was clear for reading, writing or going out. Buster, by the way, was only a kitten at the start and had a teddy bear to play with. He was a jealous cat and if Mills petted the bear, Buster sprang upon it and rent it with his claws. An orchestra in a café nearby accompanied all the proceedings with varied selections, from *Trovatore* to the *Merry Wid.*



Quincy and his friend occupied the apartment until November 1.

One of the concerns that tried him as this first year in New York wore on was his maiden vote. He was resolved not to cast it for Mr. Taft; but Colonel W. J. Bryan appealed to him even less. He talked in his letters of throwing it away on the Prohibition candidate, but there is no clue as to how he finally decided. Perhaps he moved so often that year that he was not qualified to register when the time came.

At one period he had been attracted by socialistic theories, at least to the extent of examining and analyzing them. His strong common sense and logical faculty saved him from their lure. The cure was made perfect by a visit on Easter Sunday to the Church of the Ascension, where the Rev. Percy Stickney Grant was endeavoring to mingle radicalism with the Gospel. "I once thought," he wrote home, "that I might have some rudiments of socialism in my make-up. Not so! Please excuse me from anything savoring of the brand I heard last night." In a letter to his father he was even more contemptuous of the hybrid cult. He almost got to the point of calling names.



## CHAPTER V

ACTIVITIES AND ACQUAINTANCES OF A STAR REPORTER—ROOSEVELT AND MITCHEL—COLLEGE DEBTS PAID OFF—CONVENTIONS AND VACATIONS—RELIGIOUS STIRRINGS.

MR. MILLS finally broke away from Statesville for good and all and returned to New York. He arrived on September 18 or 19, 1908, as indicated by a card from Quincy to his mother, postmarked the 19th, 5 P.M., and expressing pleasure at his father's looking to be "in better shape than I have seen him in years." Mr. Mills formed a business connection at once, as Quincy wrote to his mother. Mrs. Mills remained with relatives in Statesville until October when she came to New York. The family was once more reunited at the beginning of November and the old life, with necessary modifications, was resumed in an apartment on Washington Heights.

This was indeed a happy change for all three of this long separated group, but it was by no means so fortunate for the present narrative, since, with the cessation of Quincy's letters home, the great source of firsthand information regarding his ways of living, his modes of thought, his expanding mind and character is cut off. However, from sundry sources, scrapbooks and newspaper clippings, a few notes and postcards and a diary in which he jotted down fitfully some of his doings in 1910, 1911, and the early part of 1912, some light can be extracted.

One thing which exercised him greatly was the search for a religious or spiritual anchorage. It has been seen



that old-fashioned orthodoxy had no appeal for him. He visited many churches of many sects and listened eagerly. He came away unsatisfied. He gave a trial of some duration to the Ethical Culture Association and he has left a large collection of its tracts and pamphlets, some of them marked, showing careful study. He also experimented with Unitarianism but got no satisfaction to his soul. At the same time, he read deeply on religious questions. *Is Life Worth Living?* by William James was one of the books; another was *Ethics of the New Testament* by David Saville Muzzey. He read Matthew Arnold's *God and the Bible* and Andrew Lang's *Myth, Ritual and Religious*, simultaneously. The latter, he found the less interesting and rated it as material for future thought. Arnold's work he pronounced "as near to being a perfect statement of the hazy religious views we [himself and his mother] have attempted to discuss together as I expect ever to find. . . . After calmly demolishing the personal God theory, the miracular and the metaphysical bases upon which all so-called orthodox Biblical interpretation is founded, he starts in to show that while these are all wrong there is in the Bible the foundation for all the comfort, all the encouragement and the inspiration that is claimed for it and much more. . . . At this juncture, about all the harvest I have reaped is that I came like water and like wind I go—of which I already had an abundant crop ready garnered and in storage." He concluded: "While Arnold made it very clear as to what I should not believe, he gave me little assistance in a positive direction, just as I feared. Furthermore, I don't believe anybody ever will."

The upshot was that he adhered to no sect and joined no spiritual organization. Soon his quest after a clear light ceased. He settled into a state of quietude—not without a latent interest in the great issue—and a receptive calm. He pitched his life according to the high ideals which he



had cultivated and trusted to destiny or Providence for the outcome. In this respect, he adopted the attitude of more than one of his forbears of the Scotch-Irish strain. Wundt's *Principles of Morality* had been a favorite of his since college days and Victor Hugo's *Intellectual Autobiography* became and remained a sort of *vade mecum* to him as to things of higher import. He sent a copy of the Hugo to his mother as a Christmas present in 1907 with a letter in which he says: "I am sending you a book that you will like. I am more daffy about it than you are about Shaw. . . . Knowing that you wouldn't object, I have marked it well. . . . Note especially the development of the theme in 'Supreme Contemplations' and the ideals of religion and the Deity expressed in 'Life and Death,' 'Things of the Infinite' and 'God.' The 'Thoughts' are full of meat too. The things we have talked over, many of them, you will find identical with the views expressed." More has to be said of this further on. These works and Browning's poems were the steady companions and counsellors for years of his hours of thought and study.

At the same time his thoughts were not all of another world. He was very much alive and very human. Just one more extract from a letter written to his mother shortly before the family reunion, to illustrate his attitude of mind; after speaking incredulously of the report that a cousin was on the road to matrimony, Quincy writes:

When Durand puts on a high collar and starts, right then am I going to get busy and find a maiden before they all get mortgaged. When he gets excited, it will be high time to hurry. Speaking of *your* future daughter-in-law, you needn't worry yourself to any marvellous extent on that subject. She hasn't been roped yet. But you had better nerve yourself against the time when she is cornered, for I am going to do it all at once and the first you will know about it will be when I lead her up in front of you and say: "Maw! Here she is; I



hope you'll love each other." Then, while I go around the corner, it will be up to you two to fall upon each other's necks.

Considering the success his verse writing had at college and an undoubted facility in metre and rhyme, it is odd that he made little or no effort to utilize the gift after reaching New York. Just once he tried his hand on a merry bit for the comic weeklies, but unsuccessfully. Indeed he seems to have taken less pains than with his earlier trials and to have fallen short of their technical merits. However, as the piece illustrates his attitude of mind at this time, it is interesting for biographical if not for poetic reasons. It will be observed that he follows here, as in his lines to the college bell, the *Maud Muller* rhyming of the participle "been":

#### IT'S DIFFERENT

It's different, very different,  
Or so the critics say,  
With the poets and the nearly-verse  
Hashed out by them to-day  
And the bards whose liquid measures  
Were once well worth the pay—  
Beyond a doubt the signs all point  
To poesy's decay.

No denying that it's different,  
But, granting this decline  
And that the rhymesters of the hour  
Have missed the drink divine,  
When Sappho trilled the lyric muse  
And Virgil wrote his line  
The vintners hadn't learned to put  
Condensed lye in their wine.

And it very rarely happened,  
'Way back in Homer's time,



That you had to dodge a taxicab  
While digging out your rhyme;  
And when Mæcenas read the dope  
'Twas easy work to climb,  
For he passed out a bag of gold  
Where now they toss a dime.

And Horace, Ovid, and the bunch,  
At verses all so pat,  
Had to pound no bucking typers  
After going on a bat;  
Nor did Dante's ideal ever wear  
A Merry Widow hat,  
Or Shakespeare's have to dink it in  
A five-room Harlem flat.

Now all this makes a difference—  
You bet it does—and when  
We poets dream of bygone times  
And sigh for what has been,  
We know full well those golden days  
Are not to come again  
For this is proof, ah, era blest,  
There were no critics then!

The last time he ever tried his hand at verse was in a few burlesque stanzas, left unfinished. They were written apropos of a visit which the mother and sister of his partner in the apartment housekeeping enterprise made to them. They are quite informing in their way as well as jocund, so a few stanzas from the fragment of *Ye Ballade of Ye Fayre Cookye* may be interesting:

Ye cookye came from Boston towne,  
In ye nicke o' tyme came she;  
Ye batch club bunch was lyke to drowne  
To end their misery.



## One Who Gave His Life

Their toast was burnt, their steak was tough,  
Their jaws, they ached full sore;  
Ye table talk at tymes waxed rough,  
She should have come before.

Ye cookye looked ye place about,  
And rolled up both her sleeves;  
Ye grime and grease she put to rout,  
As wynde ye autumn leaves.

Ye cookye doffed her coat of blue,  
(Oh, she was fayre to see!)  
She pursed her lips with purpose true  
And said: "Leave this to me."

Ye pots and pans, they whirled around,  
As by a cyclone spun;  
Ye neighbors at ye fearsome sound,  
Brought firemen on ye run.

Pity there is no more of it. It was just a skit, but it was characteristic. From this time on, Mills had no time for poetry. He threw all his energies into his true vocation. He was consumingly busy with newspaper prose.

He made steady progress in *The Evening Sun* office. He gained a reputation for wide awakesness and for accuracy. His writing improved rapidly. He had lightness of touch, clearness and vivacity of style. Higher and higher grades of work were entrusted to him and with them came successive increases of pay; he had one in 1909 and two in 1910. These enabled him to throw off one burden. It will be recalled that he was in debt for a large part of the expense of his education and his coming to New York and it has been seen how he paid off his loans at the Statesville bank out of his correspondence and special work for the *Charlotte Observer*. He was reducing



simultaneously out of his New York earnings debts to friends who had helped him. These being disposed of, he took up several notes that he had given to the University of North Carolina for tuition fees. The last of these, two notes for \$30 each, dated January 4, 1906, and January 1, 1907, he paid in January, 1910. A letter from Mr. A. E. Woltz, the Bursar, acknowledges receipt of the draft on the 29th, adding: "This covers your entire account with us, so far as we know."

Mrs. Mills in writing of this matter points out the difficulty Quincy must have had in accomplishing this end out of the slender salary which he had been receiving down to this time. It was a feat of resolution and self-sacrifice. "How we did celebrate when it was finally paid off!" she says. Mills never again went into debt for anything. He had a horror of owing money and though he often helped others, he never borrowed. He was exact and careful in business matters and at the same time generous and liberal. By saving and investment he gathered in the eight years which he had still to live a substantial estate, yet he had always money available for every proper purpose. His mother owned considerable property in North Carolina, a house in Statesville, and timber lands approaching maturity but as yet providing no income. The taxes on these holdings was a heavy liability. "Just as soon as the burden of debt was removed from his shoulders," Mrs. Mills records, "Quincy relieved me of the expense of keeping up the taxes and assessments. Otherwise I could not have held the property so as to secure its full value. What a mockery it is to have the profit now, when he is not here to share it."

The career of a crack reporter is very little more than a summary of the news from day to day. It would be an endless and essentially a tedious process to follow all the



details of Mills's activities. He remained in charge of the Curb Market only a short time—until January, 1909. It was seen that he was thrown away on mere copying of figures. He was next assigned to general reporting and was employed on all the leading events with a constantly accentuated slant toward politics.

Walter L. Hawley, the regular City Hall reporter for *The Evening Sun*, was in failing health about that time. He was frequently unable to cover the field and Mills was constantly sent over to help him. Unhappily he died in the early part of the year and from that time until 1915 Mills was in charge of the department save when detached for special duty. April 13 was the first day on which he supplied all the news from "the Hall"; it was not an unlucky date for him. He began with four long display head articles. Work never frightened him. He supplied reams of copy, grave and gay. George B. McClellan was Mayor at the time. Mills therefore served at the City Hall during the terms of three chief magistrates, McClellan, Judge Gaynor and John Purroy Mitchel. He had the confidence and good will of all three.

By the time the fall of 1909 arrived, he was rated one of the best men on *The Evening Sun* staff. This is shown by the fact that he was one of those assigned to "cover" the Hudson-Fulton Celebration, which ran from September 25 to October 9, an event of national, indeed of international importance, seeing that squadrons of warships from all parts of the world as well as a great American fleet participated. His press card, admitting him everywhere, is among his souvenirs. His scrapbooks show that he did much of the principal narrative and descriptive work. Besides, he suggested a column of "Sidelights on the Big Show," a daily collection of short anecdotes of spectators' experiences and incidental sketches of the visitors who thronged to New York. The idea was



adopted, and Mills won much commendation for it. Hundreds of amusing items resulted, of which he himself wrote a large number. The "feature" was a great success for the paper. This sort of matter is for the most part but of momentary interest, but here is a paragraph of his that has a lasting suggestion:

One of the things that will be missed most [after the show] will be the musical jangle of the ships' bells striking out the hours, especially during the night. Not that the Harlemites haven't clocks to keep them posted as to the time without reference to the sailorman's six or eight bells, but then there is something pleasing about hearing those strokes ring out on the still night air, beginning so far up the river as to be scarcely audible and passing on from ship to ship by bells, no two of which have the same tone, until they are lost in the opposite distance. It is surprising how far those chimes can penetrate at night, and how they have come to be the customary thing. It will be hard to get along without them.

Some of the items were mere quips or jests:

The float "Titania" was passing and the pair who looked as if they might be a trifle weak on literary information were studying the pantomime of Bottom and the Fairy Queen with manifest interest.

"What do you make of it, hey, Bill?" inquired No. 1.

"That," replied Bill, who had evidently fared badly of late in the lists of love, "why, that means that any feller as gets daffy over a woman ought to have a donkey's head stuck on his neck."

And Shakespeare being interpreted, the float passed on.

A diner at a restaurant in show week looked rather blue when he received his check.

"What's the matter, old man?" asked a man near him. "Broke?"



"Not yet, friend," replied the sorrowful one, "but I'm—well, bent."

And again:

In front of his place of business an enterprising saloon keeper uptown has hung this sign, brilliantly studded with electric lights and with a hand pointing to his door: "To the warships."

"He's about right," said one man who read the sign. "One schooner is harmless enough, but a sufficient number of them can certainly start a handsome battle."

As the years wore on, politics, as distinguished from municipal routine, began to figure more and more in the clippings which Mills made of his work and of which his mother has a large collection. We have seen that he developed his first interest in politics as a boy at his mother's knee when she read aloud to his grandmother the transactions of the North Carolina Legislature. When he took up journalism as an occupation he had the ultimate purpose of making it a road to public life; he never gave up that idea and he purposely specialized on politics as a method of approach toward his goal. His first large experience was in the municipal election of 1909 when William J. Gaynor, the Democratic nominee, was victorious over Otto T. Bannard in a super-heated mayoralty contest.

Mayor Gaynor was inaugurated on January 1, 1910, and Mills had curious experiences with him, as everyone had. Of these something is recorded in the diary which he kept by fits and starts that year. On Tuesday, January 4, this entry occurs: "Informed by Mayor Gaynor that I had no manners." The explanation appears on January 8: "The Mayor's objection to my manners was that I held him up on the portico of the City Hall. He didn't



like that way of applying for news. But he will have to get used to it."

This was rather a rough beginning, but the Mayor soon came around, as witness this note:

March 15, Tues: Mayor Gaynor's dinner at the Hotel Knickerbocker. Will not soon forget how he proved himself to be a judge of good wine as well as a scholar and jurist. He did me the honor to remark that *The Evening Sun* printed the most intelligent news from the City Hall. Wonder when he is planning to kick me.

The Mayor's oddities of temper were well known. However, relations went on improving:

April 5, Tues: Mayor Gaynor complimented me by asking me to brief a story for him. "I have noticed that your stories are mighty accurate and I want to get this one right."

The inevitable "hitch" soon came, also its rebound:

April 22, Fri: Another compliment from Mayor Gaynor. This time I was a liar, or, at least, a near-liar. Am getting into favor. Gaynor accused —— of being a thief and then made him ——. What is being reserved for me?

April 23, Sat: Today the Mayor stopped me in the corridor to sop over his slip of yesterday. Said I handled the excise question better than anyone else. What a joke! The trouble was that he didn't like the way I reported his address at the Chamber of Commerce. The truth is not always pleasant to see in print.

July 12, Tues: With Mayor Gaynor in his automobile up to De Witt Clinton Park to see the children on their "farms." Mr. Gaynor was as gracious as it is in his nature to be.

Mills was away on vacation when Mayor Gaynor was shot on the deck of a ship at a Hoboken pier as he was



about to sail for Europe. On his return, on August 30, 1910, he wrote: "Learned that while I was away Gaynor expressed the opinion that I promised more than any of the reporters at the Hall as to prospects."

He grew in the Mayor's esteem steadily, down to the latter's death in September, 1913. The Mayor considered appointing him to one of the minor commissioner-ships in the city government. Mr. Robert Adamson, who was transferred from the post of Secretary to the Mayor to that of Fire Commissioner, urged Mills not once but twice to become his secretary; but Mills realized that he had not yet gone his full way in journalism, and declined. These were only the first of several offers he had to enter politics by way of office-holding. Besides several offers from the Municipal service, in April, 1914, Mr. Eugene Lamb Richardson, the New York State Superintendent of Banking, tried to woo him from the newspaper field into his department.

On February 23, 1910, Mills was sent to Albany to report the struggle between "Fingy" Connors and Charles F. Murphy over the Chairmanship of the Democratic State Committee. Incidentally he records his enjoyment of the frozen Hudson shining in the light of a full moon. "You did damn well yesterday," was Mr. Cooper's comment on his work when he reported at the office on his return. As to his early experiences at Albany—they became varied—there is an undated letter, also without postmark, which gives a gloomy impression of the standards prevailing there, that is shared by many newspaper men. It was written to his mother and in it he said:

Watching the legislature working has been interesting and valuable. After witnessing the process of grinding out laws and looking over the sort of men who do the grinding, anyone must wonder, not that laws are so bad but that they are no worse. You will be surprised to know that the ablest men here



are the Tammany men, and likable men at that. Also their morals are certainly no worse than those of their Republican contemporaries.

On August 26 he saw the end of the Connors fight at the Hoffman House, when the redoubtable "Fingy" stepped down and John A. Dix was elected to succeed him. On August 16, he reported the meeting of the Republican State Committee at which Colonel Roosevelt, as he puts it, was "repudiated"; what happened was that his choice for Chairman of the State Convention was rejected.

Mills had already made Colonel Roosevelt's acquaintance. It was on June 18, upon the occasion of the spectacular return from Africa. "Saw him land at the Battery," reads the diary entry. "Quite an ovation. Whatever one's opinion of him, the Colonel has a mighty winning personality." Mills thought enough of the event to keep his ticket of admission to Pier A as a memento.

He reported the Democratic State Convention at Rochester in September. It was his first experience of the kind. Mayor Gaynor's withdrawal as a candidate for Governor "knocked all the interest out of the gathering. . . . If this is a sample, I care for no more. . . . About the hardest and least satisfactory job I ever tackled." But Mr. Cooper telegraphed him: "The report of convention proceedings is just what we want. Please continue throughout in this style, giving a picture of what is doing." Before returning home, he visited Niagara Falls. Plainly he was out of sorts for he writes: "The American Falls disappointing."

In 1911, following up his Hudson-Fulton hit, he invented a column which he first called "City Hall Notes" and later "At the City Hall." He started it on May 16, and it ran for many months. He took great pride and great pains in making it entertaining. It consisted of



short items between dashes, mainly of humorous or personal interest. This was an off-year in politics, but the Subway issue was a burning topic of municipal news. Among the hundreds of squibs, many were about it. One day Colonel Williams of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company visited the City Hall. Of course he was asked the why and wherefore. "I hear," he replied, "they're giving away golden apples over here." Whereupon an Interborough man commented, "I wonder if Williams knows the difference between an apple and a lemon."

Mills reported the entire struggle over the great plans and contracts. It ran through years and he continued to handle it in Mayor Mitchel's term when the "Dual Contract" was concluded between the City and the Interborough and Brooklyn Rapid Transit companies. He became an expert on the entire subject and always kept his knowledge up to date to the close of his service for *The Evening Sun*.

He also contributed his mite to an amusing controversy which started in all the newspapers that year and has continued intermittently ever since. These short squibs show him in his mood of gayety:

#### THE LIBRARY LIONS

TO THE EDITOR OF *The Evening Sun*—SIR: The minute that I laid eyes on your "library lions" I felt perfectly at home on Fifth Avenue. We have thousands of just such beasts running loose in the long leaf pine woods down here. We call them razorbacks. M.

FROG LEVEL, GA., July 24.

TO THE EDITOR OF *The Evening Sun*—SIR: Your concern as to the species of the animals chosen by the sculptor to grace either side of the entrance to your new Public Library is all the more pitiable in that it displays your ignorance. You have evidently never seen a blind tiger. You should pay a











## Regarding His Editor

From the time of Colonel Roosevelt's death, Q. S. Mills had practical

until he grad

Roosevelt's force and a...  
by the egotism and a...rent

### Q. S. Mills Interviewing Theodore Roosevelt in 1912

complete sympathy with the Colonel until he had taken up his great fight for American preparedness in Europe.

The year 1912 was a great one in American history. It was the year of the tripartite struggle between Woodrow Wilson, President Taft and Roosevelt. All through the months before the election, Roosevelt again until the close of the campaign, reporters followed the "Progressive" leader as he traveled down the country, he was besieged him at the White House. He was surrounded by his associates.



Q. S. Mills Interviewing Theodore  
Roosevelt in 1912





visit to North Carolina, now that the state has gone dry. I was certain of the identification as soon as I saw the works of art in question on my recent visit to your city. TAR HEEL.

CHARLOTTE, N. C., July 25.

From the time of Colonel Roosevelt's arrival from Africa, Mills had practically a monopoly of reporting him for *The Evening Sun*. No other reporter, when he could be reached until he graduated into editorial work, was ever assigned to interview the Colonel, or describe his doings. He came to like the Colonel and admire him, but was never swept off his feet into the ecstatic pose of the true and utter Rooseveltian. He had a clear appreciation of Roosevelt's force and ability, but he was often irritated by the egotism and apparent desire to settle everything and dictate to everybody, which estranged so many people. One thing seems to have surprised him very much, a frequent disregard of formality. He spoke at home with great surprise of the Colonel kneeling on an armchair and leaning over the back of it as he talked to the newspaper men at Sagamore Hill. He was never in complete sympathy with the Colonel until the latter took up his great fight for American preparation to enter the war.

The year 1912 was a great one in national politics. It was the year of the tripartite struggle between Woodrow Wilson, President Taft and Roosevelt for the Presidency. All through the months before the Republican convention and again until the close of the campaign, a band of reporters followed the "Progressive" insurgent leader up and down the country, haunted him at Oyster Bay and besieged him at the *Outlook* office. Mills was always chosen by his associates, themselves crack reporters, to do the questioning when the Colonel was to be quizzed. They knew the Colonel liked him and they knew that Mills could not be rattled or browbeaten.



When it came to turning the results of his interviews or other reportorial activities into "copy" Mills showed no tenderness for the Colonel's feelings. He had a mordant satiric power, a strong sense of humor, and free rein so far as his paper was concerned. His stories must often have been sour reading for the victims of his pen. Often these found themselves made delightfully ridiculous; yet the touch was so light, the spirit so free from any trace of ill-nature, that they seldom grew angry. By way of sample of his reportorial style, his account of the famous upheaval in the *Outlook* office, printed in *The Evening Sun* of Thursday, June 19, 1913, compels reproduction here:

#### GLIMPSE AT T. R. PAY ENVELOPE.

COLONEL'S GESTURE FORBADE MR. ABBOT TO OPEN IT.

#### HOT FIRE OF NOT-A-WORD

BUT THERE'S NO SCRAP IN THE *OUTLOOK* OFFICE, REALLY.

Only a motion picture operator with plenty of film, good elastic film capable of withstanding all sorts of strain, could give an adequate idea of the energetic denial made at the *Outlook* office today of the reported disagreement in that paper's official family which was alleged to have resulted in the withdrawal of W. B. Howland, for twenty-three years the publisher, and his two sons, Karl V. S. and Harold J. Howland, from the firm. It was rumored that the fuss was about a strike on the part of the Colonel for a raise in salary, his salary at the time being placed by rumor at \$50,000, and that the Howlands got out rather than pay the raise.

The movies operator with his machine trained on the corridor of the *Outlook* offices at 287 Fourth Avenue shortly after 11 o'clock would have caught the figure of Harold J. Howland turning the corner rapidly from the direction of the Contributing Editor's office. Mr. Howland did not appear to be



highly elated at the opportunity to say something regarding the change in the firm.

"My father and brother have said all that is to be said on the subject," said Mr. Howland.

Diligent endeavor has failed thus far to get any expression at all from either Mr. Howland's father or brother.

"Are you still as loyal a Progressive as ever?"

"You bet I am, even if I'm not a candidate for office"—referring to his candidacy for Congress in New Jersey last fall.

Just at this minute Col. Roosevelt looms into view, flanked by his secretary and going strong. Business of hasty pressing of elevator button by Mr. Howland. Elevator stops and he jumps in.

"Col. Roosevelt, District Attorney Whitman visited you at Oyster Bay yesterday"——

"Not-a-word! Not-a-word! Not-a-word!"

No "talky" apparatus speedy enough to take that gatling gun negation of the Colonel's could ever be geared up to a moving picture machine.

"About the Howlands leaving the *Outlook*, then?"

"Not-a-word! Not-a-word! Not-a-word!"

Right here Lawrence Abbot, president of the *Outlook* company, breaks into the picture. Business of earnest conversation between the Colonel and Mr. Abbot. Mr. Abbot:

"No, Col. Roosevelt does not desire to say a word, but I do not object to stating that there is no basis whatever for the story of contention in this office. Mr. Howland wished to make his change simply to carry out some ideas of his own in the publishing field. As for Col. Roosevelt's salary, his salary is"——

Business of Mr. Abbot looking inquiringly at Col. Roosevelt, the while the Colonel gesticulates vehemently.

"Is"——

More vehement gesticulation.

"Is not anything like the sum mentioned in the stories. The stories are grossly exaggerated. Col. Roosevelt's salary is"——

More vehement gesticulation from the Colonel.



"Is"——

Still more vehement gesticulation.

"Is not half the figure mentioned."

Anyway, the public almost found out what Col. Roosevelt is getting. And the strain of the ordeal overwhelmed Mr. Abbot so completely that he nearly collapsed against the banisters. It was no use trying to run down the other rumor, which is to the effect that the Howlands are going to wean the Colonel away to the *Independent* as soon as they get established there. The Colonel, to Mr. Abbot, grabbing his arm:

"Oh, you were wanting to confer with me!"

Exeunt omnes.

Colonel Roosevelt actually formed a very high regard for his interrogator-general. One day he walked into the Reporters' Room at the City Hall and asked for "my little friend Mills." They had a long and friendly chat together. In order to complete this episode, although once more the chronological sequence is broken, the Colonel's last word, written when he heard that Mills had gone to France, may best be given here:

#### METROPOLITAN

432 Fourth Avenue, New York

OFFICE OF  
THEODORE ROOSEVELT

December 27, 1917.

MY DEAR LIEUTENANT MILLS:

Three cheers for you! I am as pleased as Punch.

With all good wishes,

Faithfully yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

LT. QUINCY S. MILLS,  
Co. G. 168th Inf.,  
American Expeditionary Forces,  
France.

Mills was sent to both of the regular party conventions in 1912, the Republican at Chicago from June 18 to June



22 and the Democratic at Baltimore from June 24 to July 2. It is hardly necessary to remind readers that both were occasions of turgid struggle and perfervid excitement. Mills's assignment to them shows that he had climbed very close to the top as a political reporter. His diary for the early months of this year is a condensed record of the notable sayings and doings of the party leaders, as they appeared in the newspapers and regardless of whether they were gleaned by himself or not. Apparently he compiled them for ready reference. Among the entries is this one on a January page: "On the 11th, Bryan informed me that I was an idiot." There is no explanation, but *The Evening Sun* was not very friendly to Mr. Bryan and Mr. Bryan had not the temper or quality of Colonel Roosevelt.

When it comes to the pages covering the convention dates, they are all blank. He wrote a long letter home from the Twentieth Century Limited on his way to Chicago, complaining that although there were ten packed cars there were neither girls nor politicians on board. But after that he only sent postal cards from both convention cities. He was not too busy, however, to collect material for this which he sent on a picture card to a young lady, a family friend:

P.M., CHICAGO, June 5, 1912—I wish to state right here and now that the charges about the size of the Chicago girls' feet are base slanders. Have seen some of the daintiest little feet imaginable and the dear damsels are about the prettiest in this town that I have ever seen. God bless them. Q.

In a card to his mother he said he was busy, but had "a chance to see all of this town I want to see. I am ready to get back to civilization." Also, he says, he does not mind the work "as the office seems satisfied." From Baltimore: "Haven't got as sore on this town as on Chicago, although



there aren't so many pretty girls." He found the city too small for a convention and conditions were hard on everyone. At the end, he wrote, "I am just tired and sleepy." All this is frivolous, but his work in the paper was not. It is now undistinguishable from that of his co-workers, but at the time those who knew praised warmly his picturing of the great combat in which Bryan, Wilson and Champ Clark strove, and Wilson won. As souvenirs, Mills kept tally sheets of both conventions, tickets of admission and a copy of his expense bill which shows that his double-barrelled trip cost the office \$256 besides his salary and the telegraph tolls. Throughout the campaign that followed, he was in the thick of the fight. Especially he kept watch for the volcanic sayings and catapultic doings of the Colonel whenever he was in or about New York.

All through the early part of 1913, this was the most interesting feature of Mills's work, keeping in touch with the Colonel. He bought a little diary that year, as was his habit, but he used it only as an address book. Its early pages are filled with the names of people who could give information on political and other public matters, with their telephone numbers and other data for getting quickly into touch with them. The array included all the prominent men in and about New York. There are no records whatever of things done or said. Indeed, apart from the Roosevelt doings, there was little of special interest until August, when Governor Sulzer lucklessly convened that extraordinary session of the Legislature which took the bit in its teeth and impeached him and convicted him and removed him from office.

Mills was sent to Albany as special correspondent to report all these proceedings and the columns of *The Evening Sun* were full of his work under the biggest headlines. The story is too well known to need telling here. The



trial was no sooner over than the mayoralty campaign was on. John Purroy Mitchel, then Collector of the Port, was nominated by the Fusion reform elements over the heads of Messrs. McAneny and Whitman. Tammany drafted Judge McCall from the Supreme Court. A spectacular fight, which seemed to be close, ensued. Mills had known Mitchel as President of the Board of Aldermen during Judge Gaynor's term and earlier as Commissioner of Accounts. There was already friendship and mutual regard between the two. He was able to throw himself into the struggle enthusiastically and he did. The tug-of-war seemed to be desperate; but there never was any real doubt as to the result. After one of the most exciting municipal campaigns on record, Mitchel was elected Mayor, carrying every one of the five boroughs, and the city by more than a hundred thousand majority.

The work of the campaign was exhausting. When it was all over, Mills went on a trip to New Orleans for rest. He sailed on November 24, and the trip became the occasion of one of his best news beats. On October 15, six weeks or so before, Park Commissioner Charles B. Stover stepped out of his office in the Arsenal in Central Park for luncheon. From that moment he dropped out of sight utterly. He had not said a word to anyone as to his going; he sent no communication to friend or colleague. He just disappeared. Investigation disclosed no cause for his action. The story of his vanishing and his portrait were thrown on the screen in every motion picture house in the country. The case remained a complete mystery.

But Mills, strolling about the levees in New Orleans, saw a figure that he knew well. Walking up, he stuck out his hand with "How d'ye do, Commissioner." It was Stover. For a moment, he tried to fence but he knew he was caught, so he just explained that he was tired and



wanted a rest; why should he not take one if he desired? He was surprised at all the fuss over nothing.

Mills telegraphed his discovery at once and *The Evening Sun* featured it that day, December 1, 1913, in its late editions. Next day, a long and detailed story and interview completed the sensation. The late George M. Smith, who was then the Managing Editor, wired to Mills: "Mr. Reick asks me to send his congratulations on Stover stories. Please accept mine also." Mr. William C. Reick was at that time proprietor of the paper.

Mills enjoyed the old French city and its quaint life. A batch of picture postcards that he sent home tell briefly of his exploration in the creole quarters and in the famous eating houses. He liked the experience so well that he repeated it when he took his vacation in 1914, again toward the end of the year. This time, the steamer that he went on passed through a cyclone and a young Brooklynite, a passenger, was washed from the deck and lost. Knowing that the news was sent by wireless to New York and fearing his parents would be alarmed he sent them a message by the same means: "O. K. Not even sea-syking." From New Orleans he gave the paper a graphic account of the storm and the tragedy.

He returned from the earlier trip, the 1913 one, just in time for Mayor Mitchel's inauguration. He then had to deal with a complete new element at the City Hall. Democracy was out and reform and non-partisanship were in. Mills had no difficulty in winning general confidence. With Comptroller Prendergast he had occasional collisions over details of financial administration, notably over delays in paying the public school teachers, whose cause he always espoused; but these always ended in gruff reconciliations. The two men respected each other. With Mayor Mitchel, relations of mutual esteem and friendship were soon established. Interesting light upon this period



and on the intercourse between the Mayor and Mills is shed by a memoir prepared for use in this book by Mr. Samuel L. Martin, who was Executive Secretary to the Mayor and one of his closest and most trusted advisers. Mr. Martin writes:

I have learned from the boys of *The Sun* office of the plan to publish a volume in memory of "Q"—as he was known to me—and I feel that I must add my mite of appreciation, however inadequate, not only on my own behalf but on behalf of those of the Mayor's office in 1916 and 1917 when he was one of us at the City Hall. He was one of the late Mayor Mitchel's closest friends and he was consulted upon numerous occasions about matters of policy affecting the conduct of the city government. We came to know him as a man of sober thought, ever ready to lend a helping hand.

Perhaps the thing that brought these two men closer together than anything else was the question of preparedness which in the exciting days of 1916-17 was an overshadowing one. Both men were of one mind on that question. Both went to Plattsburg and both qualified as officers. How well I recall Mills's pride in his uniform when he came to the Mayor's office immediately upon his return, and his impatience with the delays that kept him here when he thought he ought to have been on the other side. And, finally, when he was about to go, how the entire business of the Mayor's office was disrupted while the Mayor personally undertook the job of getting him a particular type of automatic pistol, which Mills had set his heart upon. That gun went with him to France and I have no doubt it was with him when he died.

I had several letters from him after he left. One of these I received late in June, 1918. Dated "Somewhere in hip boots," it enclosed his photograph—in his gas mask! Although he had been in the thick of the fight, and was then at one of the training stations preparing for the promotion that he would have received had he lived, and was enjoying what he termed a "rest," he was still vexed because he thought that everything that ought to have been done on this side was not being done.



He said, "the war can only end one way," but added that "it ought by this time to be gradually filtering through the ivory domes of Congress and the people back home that it is going to take time and men to end it *right*." His prediction in the same letter that "the German power will waste itself *this* summer" proved true; for the men he thought we should have had there at that time were on the way.

Quincy Mills died as he had lived—fighting for a principle. Always strong in his likes and dislikes, sometimes too radical in his intolerance of indifference and inefficiency, he was constantly active in his endeavor to achieve the thing which he believed to be right. He never dodged the issue. He met it squarely, face to face, and fought it with the bulldog determination which his friends knew to be one of his best qualities. His was the supreme sacrifice. The consolation to his family—if there can be any consolation for a father and a mother under such circumstances—is the satisfaction that he was *their* boy; that his principles were their principles and that when the time came for him to go, he went in just the way his principles exacted. That satisfaction will ever be theirs. The rest of us are proud to remember him as our friend—and we ought to be the better because of it.

There is always a good deal of luck as well as vigilance in reportorial success. In a letter to his mother, who was on a visit to Statesville at the time, Mills tells of a notable instance. Under date of April 18, 1914, he writes:

You will have read fully the accounts of the attempt on the Mayor's life by the time you receive this. It was a close squeak. You may remember my mentioning that I had warned Mitchel someone would take a pot shot at him and he had better get himself well guarded by plain clothes men. When he walked into the City Hall yesterday after the shooting, I said, "I told you so." He grinned.

Thanks to the able and alert reporter whom *The Evening Sun* has assigned to City Hall, that well known paper was the first to get on the street with the news of the attack. But if



the incident had occurred five minutes later I would have been drinking a malted milk over the bar of Mr. Hegeman's drug-store and *The Evening Sun* would have been among the last papers on the street and would have had very little to say of its prowess.

And so it goes—as Horace says. I've been pretty lucky, taking my newspaper experience by and large; I really do feel pretty proud of this story.

Before this outline of Mills's career as a newspaper reporter is closed, another leap ahead must be made to chronicle his last work in that capacity. After he became an editorial writer, he was occasionally drafted for special political correspondence from Albany. This was the case in April, 1917, just a month before he went to the Officers' Training Camp at Plattsburg as a volunteer for the war. He was sent to the State Capital to report the farcical proceedings taken to punish Mayor Mitchel for contempt of the Senate in applying the term, Prussianism, to the conduct of one of its members. On the third morning, April 5, he summed up the outcome in this cutting sentence:

After spending two days in the uncomfortable position of the hunter who yelled for "somebody to come and help me loose this bear I've caught," the Senate let go of the trial of Mayor Mitchel a few minutes after two o'clock this morning.

The Senate whitewashed the Senator and the Mayor impartially.

During the years of active and varied newspaper experience and progress from 1907 to 1915, Mills's private life flowed on with only trifling divergence from the contemplations and enjoyments, already described, upon which he launched as soon as he was settled in New York. The family relations were close knit. Mills spent much



time at home, reading and studying. His mother and he went to church together on high festivals, generally choosing a fine musical service. They had many friends from the South, domiciled in New York or passing through; they made many new friends. There was always movement enough in the life to make it interesting. Quincy cast his eyes on many feminine forms. Some verses which embody the same idea as a couple of famous stanzas in *Beppo*, though written somewhat earlier, are still suggestive of his attitude toward "the sex":

THE FACE IN THE CROWD.

As when two bits of wreckage meet  
Upon a foaming sea,  
And touch and part, to meet no more,  
So was it I met thee,  
Yet always still your fair sweet face  
Ever comes back to me.

Only a glimpse in the crowded street,  
Each read each, eye to eye,  
And saw, and knew—with the joy of it  
We felt our hearts beat high;  
We were each other's that instant's space—  
Then the crowd swept us by.

We met and parted, but your face  
Lives in my memory still,  
And though another share my life,  
As it may be another will,  
Sacred to thee within my heart  
One spot she may not fill.

One of his encounters with an old acquaintance threatened to be serious, but a vacation trip southward put an end to the romance, as an entry in one of those very casual diaries indicates. He was disenchanted. The diaries say



nothing, however, of an attractive young widow, whom he met on his New Orleans holiday in 1913. For two years before this, his inclinations had been strong toward a young lady of Virginia, upon whom his mother had set her hopes. The new acquaintance diverted him from this suit, yet never came to anything itself as he decided that difference of disposition might render a marriage unhappy for both.

In general, the diaries, when kept at all, record only lighter interests and doings. Operas, plays, concerts, visits to art displays, are jotted down with condensed but often pungent criticism as in his letters. His standards developed; his taste matured, but he never could tolerate fat prima donnas, however well they sang. Naturally, he was prominent in the City Hall Reporters' Association, but he was never an officer, though often urged to accept a nomination. He worked hard for the organization, as is shown by the appearance of his name on letterheads as member of the Room Committee. But in this instance as in respect of College offices, he cared nothing for mere honors. Naturally he went to all the witty dinners for which the Association has become famous, and contributed much to the humorous skits which set the tables—and the town—in a roar. He went "on the water wagon" in January, 1910, and on July 1 he writes that he "found it very safe and satisfactory riding." However, he was sensible and moderate in this as in other things. He made an exception of the Association dinners and other gala occasions. Later, he removed the ban generally in favor of light wines and beer. He used these and enjoyed them with true temperance. More than once, also, he gave up smoking for longer or shorter periods, just as an assertion of will power and mastery over himself. Country walking remained a favorite recreation and the diaries record more than one exploration of the Orange Mountains in



company with Mr. Philip Coan, with whom a little later he became immediately associated in his work on *The Evening Sun*.

He had few or no enemies, many friends, a host of cordial acquaintances, absorbing interests, high hopes, fine prospects. All in all, he lived a life as agreeable in the present and as promising for the future as any young man, just turned thirty and fighting his way in the world, could wish for.



## CHAPTER VI

FIGHTING ON THE EDITORIAL FRONT LINE—A YOUNG APOSTLE OF PREPAREDNESS—RAPs AT ROOSEVELT—CLEAR PREVISION OF AMERICA'S ENTRY INTO THE WAR.

VERY early in his newspaper career, Mills began to show ability in the line of editorial comment. He tried his hand as early as 1910, sending in volunteer articles to the Editor. He records his first success in the diary for that year under date of October 27: "It was this day, Thursday, that I got my first editorial in, *The Great Vibrator*, with T. R. and his relations to astrology as its theme." Plainly he had formed a purpose to land on the editorial page and he pursued it quietly but systematically until he won his fight. Slightly shortened, this was his opening gun on the editorial front:

### THE GREAT VIBRATOR

Who can say that the art of the astrologer is false or that the signs of the zodiac have, indeed, no influence on the lives of men? Let the doubter read this excerpt from a recent exposition of the doctrine of the stars.

"Persons born during the latter half of October . . . draw unto themselves the vibratory influence of Scorpio. They are constantly conceiving new ideas and promulgating new schemes, visionary and otherwise. The very element of newness and uncertainty in an enterprise is sufficient attraction to them."

Could it then have been chance that this, the natal day of the Great Vibrator himself, fell so pat within the proper sign?



And the "element of newness and uncertainty"—the very lure of the new nationalism illumined by the spheres. And here is more, proving assuredly that the Colonel's proper locus is within the "vibratory" sign. Of persons first seeing the light in the unsettled term of Scorpio, we learn:

"They have very decided convictions of life and how most of its affairs should be conducted"—from the raising of babies to the conservation of natural resources. "Roused to controversy, they display a most provoking tenacity . . . arguing faults into virtues or virtues into faults with equal unconcern"—as the vibrating happens to be done in the insurgent West or the standpat East. "They possess an overweening desire for change and conquest . . . fret under restraint and harbor an inborn aversion to law and conventionality." It is a long time before the Scorpio consciousness reaches that point where the legal right is the moral right—as is clearly indicated by the shelving of the "fossilized" Supreme Courts for a vibratory "stewardship of the public weal."

The oracle is fulfilled. Astrology is vindicated. It is as if the generations of magic, Chaldæans and Egyptians, had read their astrolabes only in foreshadowing The Great Vibration of the Twentieth Century. Was it still fortuitously that they coupled with "the violent sign of Scorpio" the sinister influence of the fiery planet Mars?

"Tragedy"—"hopes of false glory"—terms ominously portentous of the events of Tuesday, November 8, that are now casting their shadows before although, of course, The Great Vibrator never drifted in any tangent he ever got started on. Nothing less than comet speed for him. However great the wreck, there may be balm remaining, though, for we read regarding the vibrations of the Scorpio protégés:

"Whatever occasion for regret may be found at the summing up, it is seldom the reproach of having played too tame or too uninteresting a game."

Assuredly no such reproach in this case. Beautiful thought that; even after the worst he may vibrate ecstatically with the consolation that he at least "licked 'em to a frazzle" at Saratoga and shouted himself hoarse throughout the campaign.



And it will be mighty handy to have the stars to blame for the election returns.

This was bold hitting for a beginner, but that was Mills's way. Whatever he did, he did with all his vigor. As for the matter and view, it must be remembered that this was long before Colonel Roosevelt came to the front as the national champion in the war. Mills's personal attitude, made up about equally of admiration and distaste, has already been defined. Many shared it in 1910 and it is to be remembered that *The Evening Sun* was politically opposed to the Colonel at that time and Mills's writing perforce took the color of the paper that was to print it. For several years he took great glee in lampooning the great man. But in all he wrote there was a strain of good humor, as in the above, which must have amused the victim far more than it offended him. One bit of satire which appeared three years later, in the thick of the 1913 smoke and fury, seems to reach the very perfection of the short editorial in the lighter vein. It must have sent a wave of laughter up and down New York:

#### PITHEKOPHAGI

It will be recalled that when the Hon. William Sulzer made his celebrated eruption into the Progressive party last year the Hon. George W. Perkins said with unexpected appropriateness:

"The Progressive party is no longer a one-man party!"

It seems now that the ex-Governor of this State—by removal—still retains a hold upon the hearts and the imagination of Progressives, which awakens the suspicion that if the Colonel does not run the Progressive nomination will go to "the same old Bill."

Happy should be the party that has two such commanding figures as the Colonel and "Plain Bill," and yet it doesn't seem happy. The land of hope is wholly surrounded by the



River of Doubt. Even the Colonel, who ate monkeys in South America, seems to hesitate about swallowing Sulzer.

After his first success, Mills never lost his hold on the editorial page. He wrote steadily for it and many of his articles were accepted, especially on such topics as municipal business, local politics and happenings of interest in city life. Naturally his successes were only occasional for the first year or two. But in March, 1913, Mr. Frank H. Simonds became Editor of *The Evening Sun* and from that time forward Mills's appearances on the page became regular. He grew to be more and more the paper's specialist on civic affairs. In one article, he pictures the difficulties of the Board of Estimate over the question whether the "new" Municipal Building should be "wet or dry." Algæ in the Croton Reservoir are explained and the public reassured. The Bedford Reformatory's needs, the justice of giving a pension to the widow of a probationary policeman who was killed suppressing a gang fight, the rush of June brides in which "530 throbbing hearts were made to beat as 265," the burning issue as to whether city officials must walk or pay carfare—these and an endless stream of subjects, equally important and equally fugitive were treated with vigor and vivacity.

The saddest thing about newspaper work is its ephemeral quality. However able in conception and execution, however sparkling in presentation, however potent for its hour or day, in the briefest time the greater part of it becomes flat and unprofitable. This is particularly true of editorial writing. The news report of an event, special correspondence describing places, narrating large occurrences or explaining political, social or economic situations, may have some permanent interest and value. It is at least material for the historian. But passing opinion, detached from the event, is as meaningless as the in-



scriptions of a lost civilization. To make many of Mills's editorials, strong and effective though they were, barely understandable to-day would require repetition of dead news at greater length than the articles themselves.

In the first days of February, 1915, Mr. Simonds resigned the editorship of *The Evening Sun* in order to become Associate Editor of the *Tribune*. His successor speedily made up his mind that a specialist on New York State and local politics was needed on the page. Mills's contributions had attracted attention by their incisiveness, their lucidity and by the fund of information and the correct and consistent thinking behind them. The vacant place was offered to him early in May.

Mills was unmistakably pleased. Here was the realization of one of his ambitions, and probably years sooner than he had expected it. He was just over thirty-one years old; he had been only a little more than eight years in journalism; to reach the position of editorial writer thus early was a clear distinction. He was eager to accept. Only his scrupulous character gave him pause. He said: "This paper is a conservative paper. You may not know that I have very radical ideas. It may be that my view of many questions will be quite at odds with the official opinions which control this page."

The Editor replied: "I think it likely, Mr. Mills, that you are not nearly so radical as you think you are. Your writing suggests a good deal of sound sense and ballast. No doubt, you have liberal sympathies, but that is a different thing. And you must remember that this paper stands for neither stagnation nor reaction. If you hold your mind open and your temper under control, you will probably have no difficulty in keeping the right tone."

"Well," said Mills, "if you are willing to take the chance of my suiting, I shall be only too delighted. But I felt I



must say what I have in order to avoid any appearance of coming in under false pretences."

On this basis, the bargain was struck and Mills began work at once. The editor's prognostication turned out correct. Mills had generous democratic sympathies. He was always on the people's side, the side of the country, the State, the city as a whole as against any faction or class. But he was always just and sane. He had a clear realization of the rights of property and the sanctity of individual opinion and action so long as it was not directly opposed to the general good.

He had been preparing himself for advance in journalism and especially for editorial writing by reading and study. He bought in 1909 Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic*. He read it, too, and had much discussion over it with his mother. In 1909 he bought *The Privileged Classes* by Barrett Wendell and this also was the subject of much talk. Then he read Buckle's *History of Civilization* and Bryce's *American Commonwealth*. He bought, read and marked—he had the bad habit of marking all his books—the following works:

*History of American Politics*, Alexander Johnston.

*Political Parties and Party Problems*, J. A. Woodburn.

*Principles of Constitutional Government*, F. J. Goodnow.

*The American of the Future*, Brander Matthews.

*Contemporary Politics in the Far East*, Stanley Kuhl Hornbeck.

*Underlying Principles of Modern Legislation*, W. Jethro Brown.

*The New Freedom*, Woodrow Wilson.

*American Syndicalism*, John Graham Brooks.

*New Ideals in Business*, Ida Tarbell.

He drew, besides, from the Public Library many volumes of the same general character and, if he marked them less, he studied them the more. Such books as



Hoffding's *Outlines of Psychology* and Stout's *Manual of Psychology* he always had at hand and frequently dipped into them. Along with these serious works he constantly read his favorite poets, Browning, Kipling, the Rubáiyat, Wordsworth, Keats and Byron and to this habit, no doubt, much of the high quality of his style is to be attributed, his faculty of always choosing the best word and giving his phrase the most expressive turn.

His influence in the editorial work of *The Evening Sun* very soon made itself felt and in a broader way than was expected. In the beginning, however, his writing was principally along the line of his specialty or on topics of "human interest" as the newspaper slang expresses it. He developed speedily a special gift for short, striking articles, saying all that there was to be said on some important subject in a hundred words. Few editorial writers have surpassed him in this gift. For instance, when the City of New York adopted a new flag and it was ceremoniously displayed for the first time on June 24, 1915, he wrote a few lines which were "double leaded" and printed at the head of the first column of the editorial page that day:

Welcome to the city's new standard floating over the City Hall today! It is the emblem of the greatest city on the western continent; soon it will be the emblem of the greatest city in the world. And its bands of orange, white and blue are the same as were raised by the Dutch when they founded New Amsterdam more than three centuries ago. May New York always be true to its colors! And may they wave for many ages to come over a municipality growing not only in numbers and wealth but even more in enlightenment and civic virtue!

How different he could be when he turned his spirit in



another direction! Here is a bit of prose poesy from the paper of September 30, 1915:

#### OUR RURAL FLOWER SHOW

Those who have not communed with Dr. Van Dyke's "God of the open air" in New York City's country byways have missed the better part of living in these fine September days. This is not said in irony; it is the literal truth. On hill and in dale the wild flowers bloom in a profusion and a beauty unrivaled even in the springtime. The picture is one seldom outdone anywhere in Nature's great conservatory under the dome of the sky.

The variety of colors is such as cannot be reproduced justly either by the writer's pencil or the painter's brush. There are, to mention but a few, all shades of purple from the lilac of the New England aster to the rich hue of the aster itself and the royal dye of the ironweed. There is the delicate tracery of the Queen Anne's lace like a frilling of Valenciennes against the green hedges, and gleaming above all there is the blazing glory of the goldenrod flourishing sturdily in great banks. Not least among the beauties of the countryside is the exquisite, purplish pink of the thistle's pompons—the humble bull thistle which might well claim favor with the rose and orchid in the florist's shops, had Luther Burbank devoted himself to freeing it of its needles instead of wasting his time on the spineless cactus.

You have not marvelled at the gorgeous flower show in your goings and comings about the city? It is your own fault, then, for sticking to the asphalt-paved and stone-walled canyons of barren Manhattan, when the exhibition lies just at the other end of the ferry to Staten Island. Take a trolley inland from the ferry terminal and leave it where you like on reaching the fields. The cost is only 30 cents per person for the round trip, which is worth many times that sum to wall-wearied eyes. The tonic touch of fall in the air is thrown in for nothing. But he who would see this Nature's wonder show must make haste to go before Jack Frost enters the



conservatory and substitutes colors of his own which are fine enough in their way but are not the tints of this season.

Evidently Mills had been on one of his suburban outings and brought home a gift from it for his readers. But the man who launched the bit of civic enthusiasm quoted and did this charming piece of word painting had another side. He was up to his eyes in figures, in statistics, in the inner workings of party politics. He fought, shoulder to shoulder with Mayor Mitchel, against a State tax which bore oppressively on New York City. He kept track of subway building; he placed the qualities of Commissioner Arthur Wood's police administration before the people. The unification of the Port of New York and its development by better and bigger piers and better means of circulation from point to point for freight were the subject of many of his articles. He was always on the progressive, the developmental side. Sometimes he hit so hard, when city officials were stupid or perversely partisan, that he excited great wrath. One day he came into the office grinning from ear to ear because a very high-up gentleman had passed him in the street without even a nod because of an exposure he had made of an oppressive move toward delay in paying the teachers. A month or so later, his grin was still broader when he told of the somewhat sheepish fashion in which the same gentleman, who had had time to think, came up to him in the City Hall corridor and tried to make believe no shadow had ever fallen between them. He was a formidable man and many efforts were made to placate him. At first he was often invited to call on this or that politician and have told him the whole, true inside of things. But he soon found that reciprocity was expected. From that time forward, he contented himself with the public record and his own judgment. No one could make a cat's-paw of him.



He had, however, a high appreciation of real merit and was both generous and tactful in giving recognition of it. A characteristic example was:

#### PLAIN GEORGE

There is no more modest and unassuming soul in all the city of New York than the Honorable George McAneny, President of the Board of Aldermen. Therefore this persistent effort to force him to adopt a middle initial in his name is entirely unintelligible.

There is no pomposity about the man to justify the association of any such high-sounding prefix as George A. or George T. or George W. with his family name. And yet those who write pieces about his speeches at banquets or his sage advisings in the council chamber are continually insisting that he use one of them.

Like "the father of his country," "the father of the dual subway system" is just plain George. The most engaging thing about him is that he is just plain George, in spite of the fact that he has accomplished something that might have stumped his illustrious predecessor—namely, he has made the Board of Aldermen respectable.

Let us have an end of the attempt to make Mr. McAneny put on airs. He is too fine a touch of simplicity in a blatant and self-extolling world to run the risk of spoiling him.

Mr. McAneny acknowledged this tribute in a charming way. He sent Mills a large photograph of himself with this inscription: "To the author of 'Plain George'—by way of proof of his point. March, 1915." The article had been published on the 18th.

But, Mills's attention was far from being concentrated on municipal or even State affairs. The South and its interests were prominent and he wrote many articles on the cotton crop, the negro problem, Mississippi floods and the like. These while sympathetic were always written from



a broad standpoint. He pointed out the economic fallacy of the valorization of any crop and urged diversity in Southern planting. Again he advocated a complete system of river control. He treated the problem as a national obligation of common sense, but pointed out the enormous gain to lands in the flood districts and suggested that these should bear a just proportion of the expense.

In particular he took this ground regarding the reclamation of swamp lands when Senator Newlands, although a democrat, condemned the proposal to spend \$45,000,000 of Federal money for the benefit of some sixteen million acres in four states along the lower Mississippi. It was as if New York should ask the Government to assume the entire expense of its barge canal. He argued for a national rather than a sectional view. He was strongly in favor of the great improvement but thought it should be financed to a much greater extent than twenty-five per cent by those who benefited from it. He gave Senator Newlands high praise for his courage and fair play, for his revolt against local favoritism.

He loved trees, individually and collectively, and endeavored in a number of earnest editorials on forestry to draw public attention to the useless destruction of timber going on all over America, urging a governmental system of control and re-planting. From France he wrote, in reference to the sale of timber owned by his family in North Carolina, that he never wanted to see the land after it had been stripped of trees, and then described the strictness with which the French enforced their wise laws on forest preservation.

The cause of education in the South also interested him and he wrote various articles upon it. In one published February 8, 1917, he quoted from a report of his friend, President E. K. Graham of the University of North Carolina to Governor Craig, upon the great development of the



University's summer school which had reached an enrolment of 1050 students from only 36 in 1907. Incidentally Dr. Graham noted that the school, opened in 1877, was the first of its type in the country. Mills made the facts a plea for a larger appropriation than \$145,000, then granted by the State. President Graham wrote him a cordial letter of thanks, inviting him to visit Chapel Hill. On another occasion, discussing a report by Governor Craig on conditions of racial degeneracy in remote spots in North Carolina, Mills pointed out that these were paralleled in other states, as, for instance, by the Pineys in New Jersey. His range of interests was America-wide. One day he discounted talk about a rush to the Arctic regions after gold. Again, in *Still Unwritten*, he had his say about that vague product, "the great American novel." Rejecting a theory that its failure to arrive was due to the size and variety of the country which rendered unity of significance impossible, he said:

In the way of a great American novel, rather than any mere sectional diversity, lies an overlay of civilized complications which cover up the interesting side of humanity. Business, politics, uplift and whatnot are interesting to those who pursue them, but the novel is something more vital than a political speech, a business letter or a treatise on welfare. Unfortunately, when an American writer starts to dig his way down to hidden springs of tears or laughter he seems always to lose his way in this thick overlay of stock deals, political campaigns, factory management and tenement inspection. His shaft falls in on him and of writers of the "great American novel" there is one less.

This bit of thoughtful criticism was not his only excursion into academic discussion. In an article on *Names for Our Warships*, he deplored the fact that "the line no more knows such names as those of the *Constitution*, immortalized as *Old Ironsides*—why shouldn't there be a



ship afloat worthy of such a title?—the *Constellation* and the *United States*.” He recalls the *Bonhomme Richard*, with its great commander’s reply to a demand for surrender: “I have not yet begun to fight,” and the *Kearsarge*. Then, he had enlightened views on social topics. He had observed the workings of the marriage bureau and civil marriages while he was a reporter at the City Hall. He favored in several articles amendments to the State law which would make the machinery of marriage less troublesome and expensive to couples; but he opposed anything which tended to make the ceremony lax or casual. “It is always bad policy to make marriage expensive to poor people,” he wrote, condemning a three dollar fee system. “There is world-wide experience in proof of this, and the majority of those who seek City Hall marriages belong to the poorer, in fact, to the immigrant class.” He concluded by advocating restriction of power to marry to the City Clerk and a deputy in each borough, saying: “The validity of the marriage contract is too vital a matter to entrust its ratification loosely to a vague body of mere employees of the city as distinguished from recognized officials.”

He was always on the side of freedom and liberality. Censorships of all sorts were detestable to him and he advocated clean Sunday amusements including baseball, music and good moving pictures. An excellent example of his way of summing up a large topic in a few lines is again shown in his handling of the price question in one of its acute phases. It appeared on September 22, 1916:

“HELL BENT!”

The butchers say prices must go up or they will go bankrupt. The bakers say prices must go up or they will go bankrupt. So with the candlestick makers, the railroad trainmen with their wages, the railroad operators with their rates and all the



rest. But for the ultimate consumer nothing ever goes up except the high cost of living, and nobody ever seems to care whether he goes bankrupt or not.

This was what was called in office slang "a bullet" and it hit the bulls-eye fair and true. What more could be said from the consumer's point of view? Here was another that went true on August 4 of the same year:

#### STILL ANOTHER STRIKE TO THINK OVER

There is a lesson for all concerned in the threatened street car strike in the fact that the garment workers' lockout-strike ends today. After fourteen weeks of personal suffering, financial loss and public inconvenience the garment workers are starting where they were before.

Again on January 23, 1917 he fired a telling shot at the class selfishness of labor unionism:

#### STILL FLOURISHING THE CLUB

Every little while the railroad brotherhooders flourish the club which they found so effective in getting, on the eve of election, the eight-hour law they thought then they wanted but find now they didn't. But the flourishes grow weaker. Now it is to be a series of strikes, not a nation-wide strike with which they will punish the country if the Supreme Court and Congress fail to do their bidding. Fortunately, there is time for this programme also to be reconsidered.

He did not spare his gift of sarcasm on the politicians. This is from the paper of January 6, 1917:

#### QUALITY, NOT QUANTITY

The introduction of seventy-one bills on the first day of the legislative session does not encourage the hope that the Albany patriots will exhibit unprecedented self-restraint by curbing



the output of useless laws. This is a contributory cause of the high cost and general befuddlement of living which is persistently overlooked.

Courage and devotion always aroused his enthusiasm and he put all his heart into the glorification of these qualities. He found an opportunity worthy of his pen on March 6, 1917. He wrote:

#### HEROES, EVERY ONE

Ten bluejackets of the crew of the United States revenue cutter *Yamacraw* went to their deaths off Ocean City, Maryland, Sunday night, heroes, every one. They jumped to man lifeboats when ordered to make a desperate effort in a raging sea to rescue the crew of the tanker *Louisiana*, stranded on Little Gull Shoals. Two of the three boats sent out were swamped, and ten of the eleven men at their oars went down in the smother.

Worst of all, the sacrifice turns out to have been for nothing. The gale blew over, and the *Louisiana* stuck together. At a time when every seaman the country can muster may be needed at any hour the loss of this heroic ten is felt most keenly. They were made of the sort of stuff that is required to assert and maintain American rights on the seas.

As the months rolled on and America's deep concern in the war became more and more manifest, Mills's mind dwelt more and more on this subject and he wrote more and more about it and the urgent obligations it created. His intense Americanism now became a living and inspiring force. The conflict was well into its second year; the *Lusitania* had been sunk and many other desperate outrages had been inflicted on the American flag and people. Righteous anger burned in all loyal hearts; in none more hotly than in Mills's. From the first shots fired at Liège his indignation and pity had been aroused by the wrongs



and sufferings of Belgium and France. He understood the cold, cruel selfishness, the lust of conquest and tyranny that prompted Germany's attack on the civilized world. He was one of those idealists who thought that this country should have taken a stand for right the moment neutrality was violated and the faith of treaties made a mockery. For himself, had not the United States declared war, he would have gone to France as an ambulance driver in the spring of 1917. He had so resolved.

Long before the United States entered the war, the neglect of defensive preparation at Washington had been a matter of deep regret and serious condemnation on his part. He had expressed these feelings in articles which, however, were couched in a tone of moderation in accord with the existing conditions of peace. When the war began and the atrocious military policy of Germany began to display itself, all was changed. Moderation ceased to be a virtue. He saw almost at once that, sooner or later, America would be forced to take part in the struggle for the life or death of civilization. The sooner, the better, he thought. He crusaded for national preparedness with all his brain and all his passion of right. His conviction not only blazed constantly in his writing, but determined his own fate by urging him into the glorious career of devotion and sacrifice.

At the same time the relations of this country with Mexico were a constant menace of war, a constant humiliation and tribulation to loyal citizens. Mills felt most bitterly on this subject. He felt that the National Administration had failed to assert the rights or uphold the dignity of the nation. But what most offended him was the constant opposition to anything like military preparedness, the neglect of armament and of some scheme of drilling young men, the foolish and sleazy anti-conscription talk, when practically the whole mobile National



Guard of the States was under conscription to all intents and purposes, suffering all the economic loss of active service and almost all the hardships of a campaign in what Egbert E. Woodbury, the New York Attorney General, called ironically "an imperfect war." Woodbury invented a legal quibble to enable the soldiers in the field to vote in the election of 1916. Mills commented on August 9:

The Kaiser, who is the greatest living authority on war, thought that he was starting a "perfect war," only to find two years later that it belongs very much in the "imperfect" class. Is there, in fact, any other sort of war? We "disremember," as an old darky friend of ours used to say, ever having read anything in the history books about a "perfect war." Now if Mr. Woodbury had talked of an "imperfect peace," he would have done better.

His alibi in support of guardsmen's absentee voting is certainly imperfect enough; the proper solution is to get the boys out of the trenches *before registration day*.

As far back as April, 1914, before he became an editorial writer, he had his eye on war and the Mexican border. He wrote to his mother who was visiting in Statesville:

My work for the past week has been very light because of the great amount of (Mexican) war news. There is no space in the papers for anything else. I do not like it. The time passes more pleasantly and I feel less as if I were standing still mentally when I am busy. As a matter of fact, I have been disappointed in not having been sent to Mexico. *The Evening Sun* has not sent anyone, the morning paper men being relied upon for big stuff. . . . I would certainly like the chance. Indeed, I would rather be sent down there on no salary than remain here doing nothing and drawing pay.

Mills was totally incredulous as to the value of the National Guard as a basic organization for war purposes,



though he conceded to it a certain value as a school for officers and men. He made a study of the Swiss and Australian systems of universal military training and in numerous articles urged the adoption of a plan framed on the same principles. The reality of the war, when the United States finally entered it, completely vindicated his views. The National Guard organizations were completely disregarded, though hundreds of their officers and drilled men of the requisite character were commissioned in the huge volunteer army which was created in such lamentable haste and at such crushing expense of treasure and life.

His doctrine regarding the National Guard or militia was very fully expounded in an editorial of more than two columns, with which he celebrated, on February 19, 1916, the approach of Washington's birthday. It was headed, *Washington on Preparedness*, and it said that "there was no subject that could arouse Washington more thoroughly than the militia system. He could be counted on to 'swear like an angel at it.'" He differed from those national leaders who were expressing entire confidence in the volunteer system in the hour of need, because he had experience with it. Mills went on:

It was on the basis of this experience that Washington advanced the theory, so curious to us who have been belabored with the contrary opinion, that green volunteer militiamen are not worth anything after you have got them, as far as immediate service is concerned. Having been compelled to fight the war for our independence with such troops, he gave fervent testimony to the fact that the theory that the hand-me-down soldier can drop his pitchfork, pick up his gun and step into the ranks ready and able to chase any enemy into the ocean is most dangerous.

Again and again Washington protested bitterly during the War of the Revolution against the futility of enlisting men for



short periods, against enlisting them from the separate colonies instead of from the confederated colonies as a whole, and against the system of favoritism which placed them under the control of incompetent and inexperienced officers commissioned by the Assemblies through political or social pull instead of under officers chosen by the army staff. Again and again he protested that such mismanagement produced a state of chaos that rendered his army unfit for service, since the lack of discipline bred both disease and inefficiency.

The natural consequence of such conditions must be defeat, and no one admits more frankly than Washington that they did so result in the Revolution. The Continental forces were whipped in engagement after engagement, often by inferior numbers. A lot of spread-eagle oratory is still poured out by politicians over the manner in which the dauntless minute men grabbed their guns in 1776, and beat the redcoats to a frazzle. Not so Washington.

The article goes on to quote from Washington's report in 1780, showing his belief that, but for the blundering of the British commanders, the incapacity and unreliability of the volunteer levies would have lost the Revolutionary war to the Colonies. This opinion is urged as specially opportune for study when Congress and the Administration seemed drifting toward the same blunder by trying "to disguise the skeleton in our military closet by rigging it up in the verbal gear of a 'Federal' militia." Then the experiences of the War of 1812, of the Civil War and the war with Spain are cited to show that the faults and dangers are inherent in the system:

The regular army chiefs have been quick to condemn any such programme, but not because of any complaint they have to make against the personnel of the National Guard at present. On the contrary Major-General Leonard Wood and other authorities have said that the results obtained by organizations here and there in spite of the militia system handicap



have been remarkable. But even the best the guardsmen have accomplished is not good enough if they are to be relied on as a first line of defence, as they must be now. They lack the discipline which was emphasized by Washington as essential. It is not their fault. Under a semi-social, semi-political system of officering they could not be expected to have it. And their lack of training in field operations renders them unfit to protect themselves against the soldiers' worst enemy, disease, in a campaign.

In conclusion, the War College recommendation of a nucleus of a regular, mobile army of 195,500 men was strongly advocated along with adoption of the Chamberlain plan of universal military service, "since the present war has demonstrated that in the twentieth century nations go to war *en masse* and that the advantage, if not the victory, is still with those who, as General Forrest said, 'have the mostest men and git thar fustest.'"

This policy was not adopted by the Government. Nothing was done until after war had been declared. Everyone now realizes the disastrousness of the blunder. It cost thousands of lives and billions of wealth. Mills himself might be alive to-day had his advice been taken.

His agitation, in fact, excited great interest, as he found out later, in army circles as well as among civilians who took a common sense view of the situation. All his articles on the war and American interests involved in it and on the prospect of American participancy were written in a tone of exaltation. They commanded general attention and contributed much to the great and growing popularity of *The Evening Sun* during that period. Here is a flash of enthusiasm called forth by some discussion toward the close of 1916 as to suspending the illumination



of the Statue of Liberty in the harbor; it appeared on December 5:

## LIBERTY, THE SHINING MARK

Boldly outlined by the illumination of Liberty stands the fact that this priceless heritage of ours is not safeguarded to-day against every emergency. Not until the illumination burns upon American consciousness the truth that Liberty's safety depends upon individual sacrifice and service, will it suffice. Short of this, the more brilliantly Liberty is illumined the more clearly it shines out as a target for Oppression.

It is within that the fire of devotion to Liberty must burn more brightly—in the American heart. We have grown to accept Liberty too much as a matter of course.

During his entire service as editorial writer, covering twenty-seven months of the war period, he wrote fully two hundred and fifty articles on phases of the European conflict and American progress toward intervention. He held firmly the view of ultimate obligation to go in and urged readiness for the inevitable. His contempt and abomination for the German autocracy is illustrated in this "bullet," fired on October 17, 1916:

## BLOOD WILL TELL

His heart bleeds for them, the Kaiser assures his people. This sympathy must be of great support to the Germans, reeling in the red dance of death. But is there another family of six sons except the Hohenzollern family in all Germany which has not lost one of them in battle since August 1, 1914?

Yet he could be fair and reasonable anent things German as well, for on November 25 of the same year, he wrote this:

## GOLDEN MEAN INDEED

Those who damn indiscriminately all things Teutonic are in error. German subservience to the doctrine of the oneness of



might and right is wrong. But the German genius for system is something which America may well emulate. Americanism runs to individual license where Kultur constructs the man machine. It will be a great nation which finds the golden spiritual mean.

Nor was he ever blind to faults at home, nor silent when they took the form of class interest as against national safety:

### THE DRIFT

There is nothing amazing in the fact that the railroad trainmen have decided that they do not want an eight-hour law after all if they have to take an anti-strike law with it. This attitude is entirely consistent with the tendency in this country to demand an invincible national defence system, but to shriek "Conscription!" at the suggestion that every citizen must do his bit to produce it. Americanism is too much inclined today to want all privilege and no obligation.

This was printed on December 21, 1916, and gave voice to the reaction, general throughout the country and manifested even in Congress, against the surrender to the four railroad brotherhoods in the Adamson act, passed in the midst of the presidential canvass.

His theory of military preparedness, running through scores of articles, was based on his belief that the country would have to enter the war; even if not this war, some war in the future. The surest way to minimize the danger and postpone the necessity was to have such an army and navy as would enable the country to strike swiftly and strike hard. Knowledge that the Government was thus ready would cause Germany in the present, and all powers in the future, to refrain from provoking the United States. Therefore adequate defensive force was the



cheapest policy; millions spent on it would save billions in actual war. This view was prophetic; it is now historical.

As a first element in preparedness, he would have had all the old coast fortifications made thoroughly modern and defensible from the land as well as the sea side, so that they might not be an easy prey to expeditions landing at unprotected points and taking them helplessly in the rear. He was in favor of a navy of might enough to face any fleet in the world, with scientific basic crews in time of peace and an ample reserve. However, the navy was not a special interest of his. His personal inclinations were toward soldiering and he thought and wrote continually on army evolution.

He favored the creation of a regular army of somewhere around two hundred thousand men with a large supernumerary corps of officers. He urged the development of special services such as artillery, machine guns and aviation, to the highest perfection. He favored the accumulation of great reserves of guns, small arms, aeroplanes and all other instrumentalities of war, so that in case of the sudden raising of a great army the material would be ready, at hand, to put it in the field without delay. But he realized that all these provisions would be without effect if the men were not ready to make use of them. He therefore advocated universal military training of the young men of the country, each in some convenient year between the stages of boyhood and manhood, when the subject was most amenable to discipline and instruction, and would suffer least detriment in the shaping of his personal career. His views on this subject were based on his study of the Swiss and Australian systems.

He was always convinced that the great majority of the American people shared his views on this subject. His appraisal of public opinion was embodied in an



article, headed *Principle Always*, which was published on June 1, 1915:

Never before was Memorial Day more fraught than yesterday with all that is calculated to stir the spirit of true Americanism. The thin columns of gray haired men have heretofore served only to remind the citizens of today of the agony the nation endured for a principle only half a century ago; the younger veterans of the war with Spain have proved that within the present generation the same devotion to principle still burned; but now the consciousness of those who watched them march is quickened by the knowledge that their country faces a test of principle more trying, perhaps, than any it ever before faced. . . .

No true American, by birth or by allegiance, can fail to feel the import of a day like yesterday. It was a day to stamp out hyphens and inspire Americanism. It was a day to make those who in the past have omitted to hang out the flag at the window as a formality feel that in 1915 it is a patriotic duty.

At the same time, he resented making the Fourth of July "Americanization Day." It was unnecessary, he argued on June 21, and an insult to the patriotic spirit of the people. The presumption should be that foreign-born citizens were Americanized when or before they took out their papers. "If not, they never can be Americanized in the sense that we desire." He thought all discrimination between different sorts of citizens should be avoided. Even some citizens by birth "seem at times to accept too thoughtlessly the privileges that cost a former generation so much blood;" but broadly he thought the loyalty and devotion of the people could not be questioned. He found, however, inconsiderate selfishness in certain places and a week or two later, in *The Spirit of 1915*, he scourged employers who threw obstacles in the way of National Guardsmen attending the instruction camps. The principle of service in a democracy he set



forth with spirit and truth in a long article printed on July 14, 1916:

Democracy as understood and carried out in this country, to begin with, has required and does require the lives of its citizens when needed for its defence. Democracy elsewhere, whenever pressed sufficiently has compelled its citizens to render military service. What is more, the very theory of democracy implies compulsory military service and justifies what has been the practice of democracy since its beginning.

The civil war furnished the precedent for conscription in the United States. No less a democrat than Lincoln ordered the drafting of men into the Union army. He did no more than follow suit after the Confederacy had taken a similar step. Abroad, the most radical democracy that ever existed and made good its existence by trial of arms was also the inventor of conscription in its modern and national sense. The first French Republic, driven by necessity, created a system of drafting based on the principle that every man not only was in duty bound to bear arms for the republic, but that the service of every man not disqualified would actually be required; the soldiery ceased to form a class apart and the citizen became a citizen soldier. More recent practice in such thoroughgoing democracies as Switzerland, Australia and New Zealand shows how keen is the realization of the democratic military ideal of general compulsory service.

Why does a democracy necessarily involve such an ideal? The democratic state, despite its principle of the utmost possible liberty to the individual, is logically compelled to place certain compulsions upon its citizens; compulsions without which their very existence and that liberty which they have would be menaced. It subjects citizens to laws and to taxation. If democracy can go so far as to restrain by law and to constrain by tax for the insurance of the benefits of liberty, by so much the more can it require the first service of all for defence, which guarantees preservation of the democratic state and all its people and institutions from absolute and final overthrow.



Ideal democracy is no whining beggar, suppliant to the passing benefactor; it does not exist simply by the good graces of the volunteer soldier. Nor does it tolerate a mighty class apart, of paid soldiery, where classes are all abolished in universal equality. With its knowledge that the protecting class requires the rights of a ruling class, it lays the burden of defence on all its citizens. By the strength of its right to existence, that it may not perish from the earth, it unhesitatingly imposes the burden whenever needful.

In "For America," on August 1, he supplemented this by saying that all "reasonable Americans comprehend that the safety of the United States depends at all times upon a force ready for emergency work."

For all the forms of disloyalty from pacifism to internationalism and from hyphenism to anarchy he had a passionate intolerance, which grew more and more intense in the early quarter of 1917 when the war grew nearer and nearer to the United States and his own destiny called more and more plainly. "The-man-without-a-country pose . . . so busily preached by agitators who, we must believe out of charity, know not what they do," he feared might "inculcate in young Americans a spirit of disloyalty which will ultimately work to their own ruin and that of their country. It is well enough to hope for a world in which there may be no more war . . . but it is well to bear in mind that, if American liberty be not preserved, the approximation of an ideal condition for mankind will not be rendered easier." Again, on January 27, he wrote that "the only 'rights' an American citizen has are privileges and advantages which, in the last resort, he may have to defend with his life." Once more on February 7: "The cost of unpreparedness cannot be estimated in dollars and cents. It must be calculated in human lives. . . . If the United States cannot be strong enough to protect its own and just enough to respect the



rights of others, American freedom has been a myth from the start and will not remain long unexploded."

Naturally the teaching of anarchism, nihilism, bolshevism or extreme socialism seemed to him nothing better than treason. Under the heading, *Education in Sedition*, he thus backed up a warning uttered by a sincere American, whose indiscreet altruism, however well meant and however judicially qualified, has not failed to be a source of danger to pure Americanism:

It would have been bad enough if ex-President Taft had stated the whole case when he said that:

"The youths of our country are coming to age without realizing the responsibilities of government."

But it is worse even than this. There is a definite campaign afoot to breed in the minds of American youths the idea that they owe allegiance and responsibility only to "humanity"—although they are to take public schooling, police protection and any other advantages that they can get for nothing from the United States. Sooner or later it will be necessary for the United States to take thought as to what effect the continued preaching of such sedition will have ultimately on its Government.

On another occasion, he was still more emphatic:

#### NOT TO BE TOLERATED

The right of free speech is not broad enough to cover agitation, selfish or sentimental, to prevent war by means of general strikes, anti-enlistment organization or resistance to military draft, no matter what the country's provocation may be. Ordinarily little attention is paid to those who preach disloyalty in this fashion, but at a time when the country is passing through one of the most dangerous crises in its history their activities become an actual menace and cannot be ignored.

The right of free speech was incorporated as one of the



fundamental elements of American independence, but we doubt if the men who fought to establish that independence conceived it to be possible that any American citizen would ever invoke that right to protect him in preaching allegiance only to a "humanity" higher than and beyond the Government of the United States. The "American without a country" idea is of comparatively recent origin. In such a time as this it should be dealt with summarily, whether enunciated from the soap box or in Congress or aired through the medium of pacifistic literature.

He reiterated the need for men; "Guns must have Pointers," he showed in an article on arming the merchant ships. He became aroused over the delay of the Government in facing the inevitable, beating at the nation's doors.

On April 25, an unheaded article led the editorial page in salutation to the French war delegation, whose coming visit to the United States was announced in the morning newspapers; he wrote it. It read:

Hail to "Papa" Joffre, Marshal of France! His country could have sent us no other representative to be counted on so surely to inspire admiration and affection in Americans. Indeed, we loved him before ever he came to us—the quiet, unassuming but masterful personality against which the voluble bluster of Teutonic egotism broke itself and was hurled back in the first agony of defeat.

Here is a man who can hold his tongue—characteristic, truly of a superman! His very silence is sufficient example to Americans to do, not to talk. In the presence of this great Frenchman can the United States hesitate to provide forthwith the soldiers required to finish the work which the poilus under his direction so gloriously began?

Viviani, the eloquent voice of France, and Joffre, the arm that has wielded her sword so well in defence of democracy, must stir us to the action for which our allies wait.



The articles and extracts from articles here given are only a fraction of Mills's war work. He wrote attacks on the Central Powers, argumentative and temperamental; he discussed every detail of military preparation. A great deal of his writing was bitter polemic, called forth by the circumstances of the moment and chiefly directed against slowness and insufficiency in preparation for the deadly struggle. Naturally a great part of this was similar in tone and character to the work of those associated with him and much of it has lost its edge and interest from lapse of time. The effort here has been to give illustrations in which his personality asserted itself with lasting trenchancy. As his first editorial has been given in this chapter, so shall be his last.

Some men would have looked for means of making this effort in some sense a dramatic climax. It was characteristic in Mills that he never thought of doing so. He was far too simple and sincere. Yet, by an odd coincidence, the headline of the article is significant and the tone is in keeping with the step he was just about to take as he wrote it. It was written and published on May 10, 1917:

#### GREETING AND DEDICATION

There was a particular appropriateness in the fact that, instead of men in uniform, children, boys and girls from the public schools made up the most notable contingent of New Yorkers chosen to extend the city's formal greeting to Marshal Joffre, M. Viviani, and the other members of the French war commission on the City Hall plaza yesterday.

It is for the citizens of to-morrow, the children of to-day, that the poilus, whom the great Field Marshal has led and as whose representatives he and his distinguished associates now come to us, have been fighting for nearly three years. It is for these citizens of to-morrow that the soldiers of America must now do their part.



That the children of to-day, the children not only of France and England and America and of the other Allied and neutral nations, but the children also of Germany and her allies, may grow up free men and women the civilized forces of the world are now contending against a renascent barbarism the more terrible in that it grasps and turns to its own ghastly purposes the products of man's genius throughout the centuries.

That there could be any other than one outcome of this struggle, that America should not play a heroic part in this struggle—both are unthinkable! And there was something profoundly symbolic in the presence of American children at the ceremony in which America's greatest city dedicated its heart and soul and strength to the battle for the freedom of the world. No wonder that men were moved to tears, they knew not why.

All along, during the two years that he furnished these important contributions to the public understanding of the war and of so many other serious questions, Mills furnished daily a number of short paragraphs, generally of a witty turn, upon current happenings. Just two or three of these may be rescued from the jaws of time, to show the style:

March 3, 1915—The circus has the spineless woman on exhibition at the Garden; the State of New York is exhibiting the spineless man at Albany.

April 1, 1915—Revised figures show that Philadelphia paid Billy Sunday at the rate of \$2.93 a head for making converts there, while the election rate for repeaters in Terre Haute was only \$1 per. The Hon. Billy makes the politicians look like pikers.

March 17, 1916—The most important spring opening so far announced is the Panama Canal, April 15.

August 7, 1916—Undoubtedly the Long Islander who killed a shark with a baseball bat dreamed that he was for once getting even with the umpire.

March 13, 1917—The poor benighted Hindoo, he does the



best he kindoo, to get a little easy honey out of the Kaiser's secret service money.

April 6, 1917—The Reichstag seeks needlessly for some such title as "William the Faithful" whereby to bequeath the Kaiser to posterity. History will write him "William the Conquered."

Light-hearted stuff! Trivial? Well, the public had its daily smile.

Now, while Mills was thus pursuing his trade as critic of events, it will be of interest to learn how he developed his own personality and what impression he made upon the men with whom he was most closely associated. One of these was Mr. Philip Coan, the second in seniority of the editorial writers of *The Evening Sun*. He and Mills had a cordial acquaintance of some years' standing. In the diaries, there are memoranda of long walks they took together in the Orange Mountains. Mr. Coan has prepared for this book an "appreciation" of his dead friend. It supplies the need for an intimate personal view at this point. It is given in full as written:

#### BY PHILIP COAN

Quincy came to us in the editorial room of *The Evening Sun* when the war in Europe had been going on about half a year. The three other occupants of that room were, personally, early and earnest sympathizers with the cause of the nations leagued together to resist Germany. They were men who had lived more or less in Europe and gained thus, as in their work, very definite ideas about the conflict. The newcomer in this little group was on the contrary identified with other thoughts and activities. He took in his work an earnest interest and pride which was a delight to behold. When not writing, he occupied himself with reading and storing away pamphlets and public docu-



ments which accumulated in impressive bundles on the shelves. They related to his specialty; and that specialty was the public business of the city and state of New York, the thing known among us as local politics.

Even at that time, it is true, the man felt and expressed the natural and healthy dislike, or better, contempt for the brutal nation that was piling up so much crass success. He felt the first movement of admiration for the gallant resistance of the invaded nations on the Western front. But this feeling was not yet intensely personal, and his chief thoughts ran in another direction. In all this he was the average generous-minded but healthily and properly home-thinking young typical American of his age. We saw the change as it came over him in the next year or so, altering him from the sympathetic but detached spectator of the foreign tragedy into an unflinching, burning champion of American armed intervention. And this change, I think, was also typical of that going on in thousands of young men more or less like himself: very like him indeed in thoughts of what was right and advisable in this crisis for their beloved country.

The influence of several men closeted together day after day and working side by side in an endeavor to catch and express the sense of events of topmost general importance is a subtle thing. Such a group of men come to share in common opinions, sentiments, that they could not for the life of them remember having discussed. Discussion enough among them there is, but it commonly takes the form of tilts leading to apparent disagreements. The disagreements are over matters of detail, often, which look enormously important at the moment, but a brief absence or the current contact with the views of outside folk affords constant reminders of how close has grown the mental partnership of the collaborators. Quincy undoubtedly took on some of his increasingly intimate



interest in the war and America's attitude from his daily companions. They have now in their minds the consciousness that they played, among his other associates, a part, however unconscious, in preparing his sacrifice to the cause of a safer civilization.

But when I come to seek recollection of the little happenings that marked the awakening of the servant of a high cause in our companion, the particulars for the most part elude me. He used to come and observe the alterations in the military line that I kept marked on a map with colored tacks. He must have participated in the endless talk about the fighting situation that went on. I do not remember that the cruel gas attack, the first of its kind, near Ypres, drew from him any especial comment; on the wrongfulness of such lawless warfare we were all pretty well agreed.

Then they sank the great liner *Lusitania*, and over one hundred Americans, men, women and children, went down. This touched him directly in his patriotic sentiments as an American. It gave him, I think, his first definite idea that we should sooner or later have to enter the struggle. The dismay at those deaths came very close. It produced in him the natural and common anger with the German ambassador von Bernstorff. He could not understand or condone the actions of the U-Boats which lent no hand while their victims drowned. The fate of these countrymen of his brought closer to him the sufferings of the harried and outraged population of the invaded regions, as the particulars of that more distant horror little by little came in.

Quincy's personal acquaintance with Mayor Mitchel grew stronger no doubt in the months that followed. Mitchel played in his case the part of a leader, to a certain extent; a leader closer and better known than Roosevelt. He soon became an enthusiastic supporter of the campaign



for military preparedness. I recall his disappointment at the rejection of Secretary of War Garrison's plan for improving the militia, and his dislike for the substitute legislation providing what he deemed a mere militia subsidy. He branched out from his specialty of local affairs, to write earnest and vigorous editorials on the subject of military preparation. He had reached by the middle of 1916 a conviction that we should have to go to war in the near future. He dreaded the prospect of an initial botch which might greatly increase the cost in lives for us. He felt in this stage of his transformation that he would before long become a part of the army that must go overseas.

Some have formed the idea that this destined soldier felt on going into the war a presentiment of what it had in store for him. Of this possibility I had no direct evidence; on the other hand I recall that he entertained for months, as the time of his passage from us approached, a besetting consciousness of the gravity of the task looming ahead: his and the country's. He would repeat with approval the warnings given out to the student officers at the Plattsburg camp, that we must stand ready to fight for several years and lose men by the million. In part, he accepted these depressing prophecies instructively as an inoculation against discouragement, which they were. At the same time it was his nature to measure the leap before taking it and to count coldly and methodically the cost of a duty which he followed as compelling. Impulsive and dashing men such as we all know make the surrender of themselves without stopping to consider. Without detracting from the peculiar virtue of such men of the headlong type, one may hold that the man who calculates the full nature of the peril before him and knowing it accepts the course that his conscience commands displays in its full flower that faculty of man which we call the free and dominant will.



Between his absences at the Plattsburg training camp, our colleague spent several busy months with us. I remember his return from the first course of training, heavier, ruddy and brisk of movement, but with mind disused by different toil to the kind of mental task at which he had long revealed his excellence among us. It was not a different man who thus returned, but at least a modified one. He had already taken something and given something which marked him apart. We saw the beginning of the change that made him over into a higher being than even the faithful thinker and toiler and the brave believer in worthy things whom we had known.

Few men could have had less to say, vocally, on the purpose with which they went to war. The business in hand occupied him. He did not waste his breath on the ins and outs of a conflict that breath alone, in his evident opinion, would not settle. He had, I think, the gift of putting the problem before himself in its simplest terms. that is, of narrowing his field of intense reactions to the work in hand. His conscience led him to action through appeal to the diligent reason and perceptions of an editor; but when he went to war he left behind him the sedentary weakness of the editorial mind.



## CHAPTER VII

FINAL TRAINING AT PLATTSBURG AND A FALSE START FOR FRANCE—DEPRESSING CONDITIONS AND AN INADEQUATE COMMISSION—ASSIGNMENT TO AN IOWA REGIMENT.

By this time it will have become plain that Mills was not the man to cry preparedness to other people and remain inactive himself. The truth is that, as he formed the opinion that the United States would have to enter the war sooner or later and as it grew stronger and stronger in him, the resolve developed side by side with his conviction that he should do a man's part—a young man's part—in the great duty of National defence. He was beyond the age for conscription, at least on the first call, but he never thought of that. It was his will and his pleasure to do his duty by his country.

Further, he made up his mind to render the best service he could. He was conscious that he had something to give besides his life. He realized that to go in as a private soldier would be to waste himself. But if he expected to serve as an officer and to captain other men, he knew that he must prepare in a special way. He had lived thirty years as a man of peace, a thorough-going civilian; to be ready to do effective work as a soldier, he must begin early and work hard to acquire military training. The opportunity came when the Government announced its plans for the training camp for business men at Plattsburg in the late summer of 1915. Mills determined to devote his vacation to this experience and arranged with *The*



*Evening Sun* office for an extension to cover the whole encampment.

He was one of the first to apply for duty in the camp and he was accepted. Mayor Mitchel, influenced by exactly similar motives, also enrolled as did more than a thousand citizens of New York of high standing in business, law, medicine and journalism. There were three encampments altogether, the first for college students early in the summer, the others running from August 10 to September 6 and September 8 to October 6. Mills was in the August tour. He was assigned to Company A of the First Regiment and had become a Corporal when the training period came to a close. Robert L. Bacon of diplomatic fame and Mayor Mitchel were the amateur lieutenants of the company. The roster reads like a directory of directors, or a list of social leaders. Out of these men, as in the case of Mills, and their like in other parts of the country, the American Expeditionary army was largely officered two years later.

To Mills, the service meant sacrifice in many ways. There were a dozen more entertaining things he might have done during his vacation. To make up for the loss of pay for two weeks of extra leave, he had to utilize every moment he could save from duty to write the news of the camp for *The Evening Sun*. He started off, however, in high spirits and on the evening of his arrival sent a letter to his mother, telling her of all the men he knew in the gathering and of sharing a tent with five comrades and being quite at home despite a fierce rain beating down on the canvas. Indeed he enjoyed the experience throughout, and profited by it in health and physical condition. It had even a broadening effect on his mentality.

He shot well, making 77 out of a possible 100 in his first try-out at the ranges. Later, he qualified as a marksman, and brought home a Sharpshooter's Medal as proof



of his prowess; "pretty good work," he says on a picture postal card, "for a rookie who never shot a rifle before. The reason was that I saw a spiked helmet on top of every bull's-eye I shot at." He came through the "hike" or long march of several days with which the encampment terminated in fine shape. Just as he started, the *Outlook* for August 25 reached him with his maiden effort in magazine writing. It was an article on *New York under a Commission Form of Government*. He had written it and it was accepted several months previously; he wrote his mother that it had lost its acute interest by the delay. It was, however, a clever outline of the municipal machinery and it included statements by the Mayor, Comptroller Prendergast and President McAneny as to their plans and ideals for civic upbuilding.

Mills's letters to *The Evening Sun* were breezy and sketchy, but thought and purpose always ran through them. One he began with a bit of tent doggerel:

Oh, the infantry, the infantry, with dirt behind their ears;  
Oh, the infantry, the infantry, that drink their weight in beers—  
Oh, the cavalry, artillery and the bloomin' engineers,  
They couldn't lick the infantry in a hundred thousand years!

This was sung to the tune of *A Son of a Gamboleer*, by the marching men.

"But what about it if you haven't got any infantry, or cavalry, or engineers to speak of?" was the comment of a United States officer who listened and watched.

Here was the keynote of all the articles: What if the country had not the troops, how could it protect itself?—the need of preparation!

One strange piece of psychology he noted. The enrolled business men never mentioned the war that was raging across the sea. It was too serious. There was no formal taboo, but not a word. Naturally the sayings and



doings of Mayor Mitchel and all the local celebrities were mentioned, sometimes with rather unsparing fun, but always good-naturedly. The letters were a strong feature and a great circulation maker for the paper. An interview with Mayor Mitchel, based on his observation and experience, emphasized the folly of the old militia or volunteer style of raising a modern army.

All the reports from the first camp, that of 1915, whether written for publication or for family reading were highly optimistic. The effect on the men both personally and in a military sense was appraised by Mills as advantageous. One product of his observation was a long editorial on *Plattsburg Psychology* which was published on September 25. The occasion was the encampment of the New York National Guard regiments at Van Cortlandt Park with an attendance of 10,000 men. This was not a war move, but the spirit underlying it was akin to that of Plattsburg. The article urged citizens to visit the camp and see the great military show, but not to miss the lesson underlying it. In it Mills said these wise things:

Plattsburg's camps would have been a waste of money if they had produced no other effect on the students than an admiration and a desire for the military life. This the camps are not doing. They are taking a mass of raw material, mixed in with which there are some adventurous spirits of course who would not object to taking any sort of chance at any time, but the great part of which consists of serious-minded men who are vaguely apprehensive that the country may not be able to take care of itself in case of trouble. In the mass, the camps are developing an educated mental state that knows why the national danger exists and what to do to remedy it. Plattsburg is actually training a psychological army, not a physical one.

The psychology of these military instruction camps and the way in which it is created are the most interesting things



about them. The detachment from the outside world is remarkable. The camps owe their existence certainly to the Great War and their critics charge that they are conducted for the purpose of promoting war, yet war is the one subject that is not discussed in these tent cities. If it were forbidden as a subject of conversation by an order from headquarters scarcely less could be heard of it. As a prominent rookie attending the first gathering of business men on the shore of Lake Champlain put it:

"Well, I guess they are still fighting over there, but I've been so busy learning that I can't learn to carry a rifle right that darned if I hadn't forgotten there was a war." . . .

The futility of our attempting to resist an invading force armed with machine guns without a defensive force similarly equipped is obvious to the Plattsburg students and graduates. Psychology may not be a prescribed course at West Point, but the officers at Plattsburg certainly apply it in admirable fashion through the object lesson of the blue steel machine gun barrel mounted on its tripod. If any rookie went to Plattsburg desirous of seeing his country go to war, the machine gun lesson changed him into a confirmed anti-militarist, but an ardent advocate of such steps as may be necessary to render the country capable of opposing force with adequate force if the need should ever arise.

The infantry in battle formation, the artillery and the machine guns all went on exhibition at Van Cortlandt Park this morning. If they were brought out only to be viewed as a display the wear and tear had better been saved. But if the visitors look behind the display and realize that the entire National Guard of the State of New York, if turned into officers, would be no more than sufficient to officer the State's quota of a volunteer army; that the regular army, east of the Mississippi River, possesses just twelve field artillery pieces, and that we have to-day only a small fraction of the machine guns and the men to man them that we should need in case of emergency, the manœuvres were not planned in vain. Just as the Plattsburg camps are held to teach men to think rather



than to fight, to-day's show at Van Cortlandt was conceived to make its audience reflect, not enjoy itself in smug security.

His views and reports of the second encampment in 1916 were much more subdued. He was doubtful whether the training was not too intensive for men who came to it soft from banks and law offices and counting-houses. He himself was mustered in as acting sergeant and he came out with the full grade. This gave him a chance to learn management of men; he had a squad of twenty-five or so under his immediate orders. He succeeded. He had the approval of the United States officers in charge and he was popular with his squad. Nothing ever damped his playful spirit; he forgot a box or two of choice smokes when he started. His way of calling for them was this in huge letters on a postal card:

**S-O-S**

**S-O-S**

**S-O-S**

**MEANING**

**SEND ON SIGARS**

**TO**

**Q. S. Mills, Co. G., Eighth Regiment  
Plattsburg Training Camp**

In most respects, the life of this camp was a repetition of the former one. Mills diversified it by making a trip to Montreal, which he enjoyed enormously. He thought the city most beautiful and the decoration of the churches delighted him. He makes in a long descriptive letter this singular comment: "It impresses me as being more American than any city in the United States, which I have visited." He adds: "While it is a city it has not lost touch with the country, which makes it a real habita-



tion for human beings, instead of a gigantic modern hotel like New York, where people merely put up over night."

During this encampment, he was greatly impressed by the United States officers with whom he came into immediate contact. All of them, he wrote to his mother were "men whom it is profitable to know." He mentioned with especial enthusiasm Captain T. Miller, of Macon, Georgia, who commanded his company. Apparently he made Miller his ideal of a successful officer, "a strict disciplinarian, yet lovable." The men always "swore by him but never at him." "When he said, 'Go!' the company got up and got without any delay whatever." Mills no doubt made this man his model when he became an officer. All that his soldiers and his comrades say of him, so indicates. He sent home a couple of postal card photographs of Miller. The fine, firm face is good evidence of the accuracy of his admirer's judgment.

The pace set in this camp was much hotter than in the 1915 one. Probably the visible gathering of war clouds in the American sky influenced the military experts, in spite of the strange "slogan" upon which the national election of that year was keyed. Whatever the reason, they drove the men hard—too hard for business "rookies," not accustomed to the strenuous physical life. Apparently this condition was realized when the "hike" was made. The days' marches were reduced. Even so, some of the men had to drop out.

Mills, however, went through with flying colors and came home more than ever convinced of the approach of war and determined to have his share in it. His mind was so made up that he arranged at once to continue active training. He bought and studied constantly a number of books on military science, including both the general principles and infantry organization and tactics. Early in 1916, an Officers' Training Corps for Newspapermen was



formed in New York. He was one of the original members. Among his papers is the postal card notice of the opening drill at eight o'clock on the evening of Thursday, January 20, at the Seventy-first Regiment Armory, Thirty-fourth Street and Park Avenue. This organization held drills under United States Army officers continuously until 1917. Ultimately the field of operations was transferred to Governor's Island. Mills was an unfailing attendant until his entry into the final Plattsburg camp of instruction after war was declared. By that time, he was well grounded in the theory of the soldier's trade and for an amateur was well drilled in field tactics and the manual of arms.

As soon as war was declared and the plans for the Officers' Camp at Plattsburg were announced, he filed his application, secured the necessary endorsements from citizens of standing, and set all his political influence at work to insure his designation to it. He was successful. He did his last work for *The Evening Sun* on Wednesday, May 9—the article already quoted which appeared on the 10th. On the 11th he started on the crowning adventure of his life. Arriving at Plattsburg on the morning of Saturday, the 12th, he wrote home at once that it was just like old times to be there again. He was enrolled at first in the 12th Company, Second Regiment. It was bitter cold and pouring rain and sleeting hail, when he arrived, but everyone was jolly. There was plenty of coarse but nourishing food and despite outrageously hard conditions, the crowd of patriotic volunteers remained in good humor through the monotony of the first days, only broken by medical examinations, exchange of civilian outfits for military kits and other like preliminaries.

Conditions in the camp were disgracefully bad. Cots were so crowded along the walls of the wooden barracks that they were in close contact and the sleepers breathed



into each others' faces; this was remedied later by double tiering as in a ship. There was no way of heating the shacks; the mess tables were open to the four winds of heaven on top of a hill, with just a roof to stop the rain. Lighting was so bad that reading or writing after dark was almost impossible; the bathing facilities were poor with no warm water and the sanitary provisions were outrageously inadequate and crude. Only the cold weather averted sickness. All these faults were remedied by degrees in the course of three or four weeks, but as there had been five weeks available in which to prepare the camp, Mills and his comrades could not understand—nor can anyone now—why the work should not have been done in advance of their arrival. The food was always wholesome and plentiful, but, considering that all these volunteers came from good homes and were designed to become officers, it is not easy to see why it was as primitive as might be expected in a laborers' camp on a railway construction job.

All these things are in the record; they are a reproach to the War Department, but they did not affect the indomitable spirit of the corps of cadets. The men took it all cheerfully and plunged courageously into the difficult task of making themselves professional army officers in eight or ten weeks. Mills was at once singled out as well posted on drill and, "first crack out of the box," he was assigned to the elementary instruction of the greener men. But he lost his head in no way; no one ever was more modest. "You may be sure that if hard work will get me there, I will get," he writes. Hard work and his own deficiencies were his constant theme, though he acknowledges now and again that he was "at least as good as the average." Besides the unfinished state of the camp, another great error soon became manifest: the number of regular army officers was far too small. At first it was about one to 165 men, later one to 150, exclusive of field



and staff. This, Mills thought, was just about one-third the force necessary for efficient instruction. To train 150 men is too big a job for one; "his throat simply cannot stand it." As for the cadets, the day was a never ceasing jump from one duty to another, with the intervals filled in with learning the regulations and all study disturbed by the noise of the carpenters still banging away.

However, this is not a history of the Plattsburg camp but of Mills's passage through it. While he helped break in the awkward squad of his company, he took a course in signalling himself and soon was able to pass a practical test with almost a hundred per cent mark. He was greatly encouraged because he escaped "bawling out" altogether. He was "appalled" at his own ignorance, but as he was as good as the average he was still more appalled that the country had to depend on such material for its safety in a crisis. At any rate, when it was wet and cold they were "more cheerful than usual. Trench spirit!" Mills had an attack of pink-eye which kept him from study for a number of days, but he carried on regardless of it. He stopped smoking altogether in order to relieve a catarrhal condition and with good results. He had the strength of mind to make the stoppage a prolonged one when he was sure of the benefit and he gave all his tobacco and cigars to a comrade and sent his pipes home for keepsakes. "Like old friends they are hard to part with, even though communion with them be no longer possible." When men were drafted for artillery training he did not apply because he did not consider that he had the necessary scientific grounding. Anyway, he regarded the infantry as the real army, the other branches being mainly valuable as support for its operations.

His love for the beautiful and for nature was irrepressible. In June he wrote: "Your speaking of looking for violets when out walking on Fort Washington



Hill reminds me to say that the woods and fields through which we skirmish are carpeted with them. And the grass fields are golden with dandelion. I have never enjoyed the out-of-doors more in my life. To get back into the woods and smell them when they are still bedewed is like a translation back to boyhood."

The transfer of applicants for commissions in the artillery and engineer corps caused a condensation of companies. Mills now found himself in the 8th, but he remained under the same regular army commander. Apropos of this change, he wrote regarding the spirit of the corps in general: "One very interesting fact is that fire-eaters are so rare as to be probably non-existent. I have yet to hear any man announce that he is full of fight. I believe the hope is practically unanimous that the war may be at an end before many Americans have to be sacrificed. But there is not a man here who would not rather go to the trenches than see the war end in any but the right way. This is about as high ground as could be taken by rational human beings, it seems to me." His mother about this time expressed regret that he had not been sent to the artillery, as a less dangerous service. He replied: "If anyone is going into this war with the safety first idea, he can be of more service at home."

From the very outset, the aloofness of the regular army officers from their men impressed Mills as a grave fault! "Personally," he writes, "I look for an absolute about-face in the matter of army spirit and there is no doubt it is going to break some martinets' hearts." This was a prophetic remark, as everyone now knows.

The impression took on a personal phase at an early day. The commander of Mills's company was a young lieutenant—later promoted to be captain—who had had an unfortunate preparation for the work and who was either too reserved by nature or else misconceived sadly the situ-



ation at Plattsburg. In a very long letter describing the camp routine, Mills gives a sketch of him and his career. He had been little with troops but had served for several years on detached service as a prison officer at Fort Leavenworth and as an instructor at West Point. "I have heard," the letter goes on, "complaint among the members of the company that he is making the mistake of trying to run a company of educated men of mature years as he would run a bunch of prisoners or a class of boy cadets." It will not be well to go too deeply into this matter. Mills himself greatly modified his opinion of this officer as time went on, and all for the better. But there is no doubt that for several weeks he was unhappy in his relations with his immediate superior on whom his future depended. There was no clash, but no cordiality; the officer never "bawled him out," but on the other hand never gave him a word or a sign of encouragement. The officer's attitude was impersonal, distant, coldly superior, though his men were socially and mentally his equals and far ahead of him in knowledge of the world.

Mills was an earnest upholder of discipline, so he made no outward display of resentment; but in his soul he chafed and fretted and unquestionably he was handicapped in his work and in the showing that he made in tests and examinations. This is shown in his letters by an almost morbid anxiety as to whether he was "making good" and would receive a commission. In a memorandum on this phase of his camp life, his mother writes:

In my notes on Quincy's school life, I mentioned his friction with a teacher of one of his schools. There was but one other instance in his career when he was at odds with anyone placed in authority over him. This was at the Officers' Training Camp at Plattsburg in 1917. The officers above him in 1915 and 1916 became his firm friends. But his commandant in the 1917 camp was unfortunately uncongenial. Quincy's temper



was kept on edge. He went through his work with scant hope of receiving justice. He so little expected at one time to be commissioned that he was making arrangements to enter the army through another channel. He had, however, no intention of using the influence of highly placed friends to secure advancement in the army. His realization of an officer's responsibility was far too keen to permit him to accept any rank not deservedly won by qualifying himself for it.

To him an atmosphere of amenity and good will was essential. He could not put forth his best mental efforts where the air was charged with irritation. He refused a fine offer from another newspaper, because there were stories afloat as to the editor's temper, and no inducement could bring him to risk contact with it. The kindly companionship of *The Evening Sun* office was dear to him and he was stimulated by it to produce the best that was in him. The suppressed antagonism at Plattsburg seriously hindered him in doing himself justice.

Whether he judged correctly his commander's true inward attitude toward him may be doubted. He came to doubt himself. The issue is raised here merely to throw some light on the strange result that in spite of his relatively mature years, in spite of his unmistakable ability, in spite of his devotion to the cause, he received a commission only as Second Lieutenant. It was due, beyond doubt, in some degree to his failure to show himself at his full value. There was an improvement in his status after a visit that Mayor Mitchel made to the camp. Of this, Mills writes:

I had quite a distinguished caller the other day in the person of Mayor Mitchel. He came in to see me especially and gave me a very warm personal greeting while the rest of Company 8 stood on the sidelines and got an earful—and Lieutenant ——— was one of those who got it. He was so impressed that he made an opportunity, later in the day, to talk with me about the Mayor. Incidentally, he complimented specifically *The*



*Evening Sun's* national defence and universal training editorials of the past and appeared considerably impressed when he learned that I had written them.

I appreciate Mitchel's personal kindness and I am indebted to him for furnishing the opportunity to show — what kind of head I have. But in this regard I must confess to a feeling of disgust that "pull" was necessary to put me in a position of advantage. It is true, of course, that I got the pull in the first place by establishing myself in Mitchel's respect and it may be that the Mitchel boost was only contributory for — said to one of my friends who went to talk to him over his own prospects that "there are going to be lots of surprises in Company 8. . . . A lot of men who have been working hard and have been heard from seldom are going to be surprised by what they get."

However, the harm was done in Mills's case and hence the great surprise that came to his friends—it was none to him—in the inadequacy of the grade accorded to him. He gradually found more likable qualities in his commander and judge, and, indeed, that officer seems to have slowly realized the faults of his tone and displayed somewhat more sympathetic qualities. Mills, while liking him better, became more and more dismayed by the insufficiency of the training as compared with the coming ordeal. Toward the close of the encampment, on August 5 he wrote: "The more I consider the tremendous responsibilities to be thrown upon the men who leave Plattsburg and their unpreparedness to meet these responsibilities, the more my wonder grows as to how this country is to measure up to the gigantic test before it."

His obsession was the officer's responsibility for the lives of his men, whether in camp or on the field of battle. He wrote of it again and again, dwelling on the insufficiency of himself, and his campmates. He spoke on the subject to his mother repeatedly. It reconciled him



to the idea of getting only a Second Lieutenancy as being something within the scope of his training.

At this period, however, he expected a First Lieutenancy. He would be glad, he said, if he received it, but adds: "I must say frankly that it will not be with any pride of position and self-conceit that I will put on the uniform but with a deep sense of humility and a consuming desire to prove fit to play the part assigned me." He looked to radical changes in himself from the new duty. "I feel," he said, "a strange impersonal sort of curiosity to see what manner of man I shall be made into if I come through. But as to worrying about whether I shall come through, it never occurs to me and seems a matter of no importance whatever in comparison with the overwhelming necessities of this world transition period."

Every man in the camp was called toward the end before his company commander, who told him "to weigh the situation and himself," and to state frankly how he felt about both. This was Mills's reply: "Sir, I must say frankly that after being here more than two months I am overwhelmed by the sense of my unfitness for a commission, comparing myself with trained officers like yourself; but when I look at the other men about me I feel that I am no more unfit than they—am not as unfit as some—and I therefore am still an applicant for a commission. But if you do not think it will be for the good of the service for me to have one I do not want it and I will take your judgment without a murmur. That is the basis on which commissions should be allotted and I believe you are trying to allot them in that way."

To this, the commanding officer replied: "Mr. Mills, the way you feel about your unfitness is a sure sign that you are on the right road. It is an inspiring thing to me to have you feel as you do. Every man in the company should feel that way."



## Mills comments:

It was mighty fine to have him say that to me. Altogether, I think he considers my possibilities far ahead of my present performance, although when he called me out to drill the company last week I drilled it without making a single blunder and without getting a "call," which is unusual. I was told afterward that there was general comment on the soldierly way I handled the men and that everyone was surprised I did so well because I was so unostentatious.

On August 10, he was assured privately but positively that he would be commissioned. To his mother he wrote: "It will be a Second Lieutenancy or a grade lower than I anticipated but I have no kick coming. Indeed, if I had been passing out the commissions I do not think I would have given myself one." In his last letter from the camp, written August 13, he furnished what is probably the true or at least the principal explanation of his low grading. He wrote again to his mother:

Your congratulations are appreciated but I do not agree with your estimate of my military proficiency. I am not good enough for a captaincy, but I would have liked to fill out a first lieutenancy. If I had had to choose on my own account I should have taken the latter for reasons of personal pride rather than fitness and because responsibility for the lives of 150 or more men is not to be taken lightly. I rather think that had not some six designations for first Lieutenancy been changed arbitrarily for this company at Washington, I might have had that rank. The change was made in order to put six regular army sergeants in as first lieutenants. The commandant was not very well pleased at having to cut down his men to second lieutenants to make room for them. Promotion is likely to come pretty fast for men who have the goods, however; so don't be disappointed.

The commission was delivered to Mills on August 15 and he at once hurried home. There he stayed for more



than two weeks, enjoying the last days of association with his parents. He had become engaged to a young lady, a distant cousin, who had for some time previously been the frequent companion of his theatre-going and of his country rambles. The difficult question of marrying or not marrying before he sailed for France had to be sifted down and settled. It was Mills who decided it in the negative, despite his warmest inclinations, in the same spirit of self-effacement and care for the fortunes of those he loved that marked his entire private life. Through this time of relaxation he went about, seeing his friends and completing arrangements for his departure with a wonderful cheeriness that left many who noted it sad with instinctive forboding beneath the admiration and pride that his demeanor inspired.

He had become a Freemason in 1907, a member of the Statesville Lodge, and had given a good deal of study to the lore of the order. It had for some time slipped into the background of his life. Now, however, on the eve of sailing for Europe, his interest was re-awakened. There was a great Masonic service held, consuming a whole day, at which some three hundred young officers were raised to the Thirty-second degree. Quincy was of the number and thereafter he wore a massive Masonic ring of chiseled gold which was found on his body and sent to his parents.

On September 1, he was ordered to Camp Upton and he reported there the same afternoon. The next day, Special Order No. 10 was issued from the Headquarters of the Twenty-seventh Division, transferring a long list of officers to Mineola to take an extended course in field service. Mills's name was among them and he was greatly pleased. The instruction promised to be most interesting and it pointed to staff or other advanced class of duty in France. He was doomed to disappointment. A more urgent need developed and the next day, September 3,



he was one of 150 Plattsburg graduates ordered for duty as "extra officers" to serve with National Guard regiments at Camp Mills. All those so designated went to the National Guard unwillingly, but without a word of protest. They had hoped to drill the new national levies that were then being made on a huge scale. They believed it would be easier to deal with the raw material than with men accustomed to militia laxity and that better results could be attained. They expected much opposition, too, from the guard officers. Fortunately they found their fears unrealized in both respects.

Mills's first assignment was to serve with the famous fighting Sixty-ninth Regiment of New York City, mustered into the new army as the 165th. He had a momentary hesitation at the prospect, not from race prejudice—for some years one of his nearest friends had been a man of Irish birth—but perhaps because of some fear of clash of temperaments over his very strict ideas of discipline. The reluctance vanished speedily, however, for on September 5, he wrote with regret that he was not to be with this regiment. "Its officers and men," he said, "have been so courteous and considerate of us, I would gladly be with them and go right on over the top with them whenever they get ready." At the same time he formed the conviction that it would be a distinction to serve in the Rainbow Division: "It will, in time, grow to be the Honor Legion of the army," he wrote. "Therefore assignment to it appeals to me. Anyway, I have a more or less fatalistic attitude toward the future."

He kept on enjoying life—the music at the Garden City Hotel; "when we haven't anything to do we can look at the pretty girls—and be looked at by them." But when he heard one of them scolding a fur salesman for offering her "common and cheap wares, at \$500 a set," he was tempted to tell her "she might do her bit by making out



with last winter's furs and donating the cost of this year's to war work." Counsels of prudence prevailed, however, and he remained silent.

His assignment was not made until September 16. It was to the 168th Infantry, an organization based upon the Third National Guard Regiment of Iowa, which had a fighting record in the Civil War and had served as the Fifty-first Volunteers in the War with Spain, going to Manila and fighting seventeen battles in the Philippine campaign before being sent home in September, 1899. The members were enthusiastic citizen-soldiers. They had always maintained their numbers and kept up their drill. In June, 1916, they were mustered into the Federal service for that strange Mexican adventure under General Pershing. Mustered out on February 20, 1917, they were recalled to active service on July 15. The spirit of Iowa was true and every company was full and all three regiments of the State Guard had long lists of eager applicants for enlistment. On August 5, the Third was formally drafted into the National Army. It was assigned to the Rainbow Division as the 168th. On September 9, under Colonel Ernest R. Bennett, the regiment started east, a vast crowd of friends gathering to cheer the men and wish them good luck. On the 13th, Camp Mills was reached and there the extra officers from Plattsburg and other training camps were sent to introduce the leaven of regular army discipline and up-to-date combat tactics.

Mills wrote his first impressions of the organization to his mother. The home officers, he found plain, "square-headed" types. The enlisted men were "about eighty per cent farm products, big and rawboned and also raw as far as military standards go, but with the makings of a bunch of 'bad scrappers' in them." He goes on: "I have been cordially received, well fed and have no kick.



In fact I like it. . . . Well, what do you think of me, a pen pusher, going to war with a crowd of hay pitchers? The last thing you look for is always the one to expect." He found many old friends among the Plattsburg officers, Lieutenant Rubel, whom he praises as an expert signal officer and who was to die at almost the same moment as himself, his Masonic friend, Lieutenant L. M. Campbell Adams, and others. Many new friends were made, among them Lieutenant Pearsall, who later came to command Company G, with which Mills served until his death. The first commander was Captain Steller, who was wounded in France and shifted to the Service of Supply. Mills's tent mate was Lieutenant, afterwards Captain, Younkin.

The men had a few days' rest and then serious work was begun. Mills had a squad of fifty to drill. He enjoyed the work hugely. He soon made the reputation of being one of the best equipped of the "extra" officers attached to the regiment. His knowledge of the infantry drill and regulations was especially accurate and it became quite the rule for "sheepish corporals" to come to him in strings, admitting their blunders and the justness of his criticisms. "This," he remarks in passing, "is a mighty good thing." He found, besides, that he developed more in a week of this independent work than he had in the months of repression at Plattsburg. Some of the officers who had known him there expressed astonishment at his new efficiency and told him that if he had let himself go in the same way at the training camp he would have "pulled down" a captain's commission. The difference was all in the atmosphere and in Mills's temperament.

The routine was varied by reviews for high army officers and for magnates from the home State, the Governor of Iowa, the United States Senators and others. Mills, in addition, was constantly meeting North Carolinians—the doctor who put him through his final physical examination,



for instance, was a contemporary of his at the University—and this always gave a momentary spice to life. The serious worries, on the other hand, were the indescribable backwardness of equipment, the blunders of the supply system and the absolute rottenness of the mails. He was also “more and more disgruntled with the discipline.” He wanted “to see the screws put down, good and proper, with all the officers as well as the soldiers turned out for reveille.” One result of this was that he was probably more popular for a time with the officers outside his company than in it. He saw signs of certain ones finding it uncomfortable to have their junior know more than they did. Yet, there was no small fear lest the extra officers should be withdrawn when the regiment was sent abroad. Mills was a man to be relied on and so were other extras.

About October 8, there were signs of a move. “Some of our roots are being pulled up,” wrote Mills. Major Stanley in command of his battalion, the Second, asked him what he would do if the choice were given him of going over with the 168th or being transferred to one of the new regiments then being organized. He said he found himself so pleasantly situated that he would hesitate to change. As for discipline, he trusted to new conditions in France. He was eager to go over—“I hate to have you worried about me so soon, but that is all.” It was soon decided that he was to go. Then he spent a day arranging his baggage and painting his name on his trunks. When the paint dried he would be ready to sail on five minutes’ notice.

The start—it was a false start—came on Thursday, October 18. That morning Mills wrote to his mother: “You are certainly a brave woman and you must continue to be so, for it would not be worthy of you to be otherwise.”

This letter was postmarked at Hempstead at 1:30 P.M.



Later in the afternoon the regiment entrained and was taken to Hoboken, where the entire Eighty-fourth Brigade, mustering 5500 men, was loaded on the *President Grant* as she lay at her pier. The vessel formerly was of the Hamburg-American Steamship Company fleet. She had been taken over by the United States at the opening of the war. All her fittings as an ocean liner had been torn out and she had been re-partitioned and equipped as a transport for "capacity" service. That capacity was now strained to the limit; the vessel was desperately crowded. The men were packed like sardines; the officers had worse accommodation than enlisted men on other vessels. An oddity of the voyage was that the officers had to do look-out duty in the "crow's nest" although some of them, lifelong landsmen, were incapacitated by seasickness. Mills however did not suffer from this malady and took his turn aloft while the reserve naval officers paced the deck.

The sun was going down behind the heights beyond the New Jersey shore as the Second Battalion filed on board. All the evening was taken up with getting the men into their quarters and some sort of order established. The ship stole out of the harbor in the darkness of eleven o'clock and joined her convoy off Sandy Hook. The voyage began fairly. For a day or so all went well. Then trouble began. The *President Grant* could not keep up with the other vessels of the flotilla. There was something the matter with her boilers.

This is an affair which has never been publicly explained. It would appear that before the vessel was seized by the Government, she had been wilfully damaged by her German crew. She must have been carelessly inspected when put into active service for carrying troops. Whatever the reasons, she could develop no speed. She was first an impediment and then a danger to the convoy.

As to the conditions on board and Mills's experiences,



they are fully described in the only letter which he wrote home while he was on board:

On Board U. S. S. S. —

SOMEWHERE ON THE ATLANTIC,  
Sunday, Oct. 21, 1917.

DEAREST MOTHER:—I thought when I came on board that I would write you a sort of continued-in-our-next epistle from day to day, but somehow there has been no time for anything. The very fact of having several thousand men on board who have never even seen a big ship before, all crowded together, would be job enough even if you did not have to concern yourself with their future safety—and your own. There has been something to occupy every minute of the time in order to take care of the safety consideration. Teaching the men how to find their way from the crowded holds to the lifeboats and rafts to which they have been assigned is an undertaking of the hardest sort. The below deck passageways form a veritable labyrinth, and unless the men are taught just which corners to turn there is sure to be a jam when the alarm is sounded—and when it is sounded in real earnest, if it ever is, great loss of life. Consequently, the alarm gong sounds so frequently that you haven't time to do much but obey it.

The men are drilled and drilled and drilled in what they must do in case of emergency, the idea being to get them so they can do it in the dark—as they might be called upon to do—and get to their proper stations in prompt and orderly fashion without panic. A favorite stunt is to sound the alarm while we are at mess, and bring us tearing out, leaving our dessert and coffee. And, truth to tell, I have a notion they do it on purpose, for the food is so good you can hardly bear to leave it unless you are literally hauled away from the table by the nape of your neck.

You are so interested in the food question that I know you will love to have a sample menu:

For breakfast we have something like this: Fruit (grapefruit usually); cereal (oatmeal, cornflakes or cream of wheat);



omelette and bacon; bread and muffins, with *real* butter of the finest sort, and coffee.

For lunch: Cold meat loaf or sliced meat; salad (lettuce or some other green stuff); dessert (two or three kinds of cake and canned pears, for instance) and coffee.

For dinner: Soup; roast chicken or beef; two vegetables; salad; dessert (pie or ice cream); cheese and crackers and coffee.

All the food comes right up to the traditional high mark set for steamships, and the coffee surpasses even that. It is the best I ever drank, and I consume endless cups of it. I tried to find out for you just what sort of coffee it is, but the best I could do was to learn that it was the regular navy issue, and made by the percolator process in big French restaurant urns.

The men fare as well as we do, their mainstay of diet being the traditional army-navy bean which I had thought to be a lost delicacy because it was too expensive for our table at Plattsburg. Nothing is too good for us here, and that suits us to a T.

Altogether, we have been mighty lucky thus far, for the weather has been as mild almost as summer, and the sea, with the exception of yesterday, as smooth as a hardwood floor. The calm has been a double blessing, for not only has it relieved the men from much suffering in the way of seasickness, but it has enabled them to become familiar with the "abandon-ship" drill. Had they been sick in large numbers—as they are likely to be yet—it would have been impossible to instruct them in this most essential business. We count on continuing to be lucky, for we had target practice to-day, and the very first shot fired was a dead hit that would have ripped the entrails out of friend U-boat had it been there. You ought to have heard the cheer that went up when the shot raised a spume many feet high right at the sham periscope that was being trailed by another one of the vessels in the convoy.

We carry four 5-inch guns, and they certainly are fine shooting irons. I like to hear their sharp concussion and the boring noise that the projectiles make as they streak through the air toward their mark. As to the size of the convoy, I can say nothing except that there are enough of us to keep any-



body from getting lonesome, and that there are sufficient warships to keep anyone from feeling any apprehension about submarines. As to what ship I am on I can say nothing more definite than that there is a whole lot of satisfaction in going over in a vessel built in a German shipyard and formerly owned and operated by a German company.

I am writing this letter on the chance that it may be given to a passing vessel for early transportation back home. Therefore it may reach you before I get over; if not it will be delivered with others which I will mail at once on reaching the other side.

With much love for Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.

The danger reached its climax on Monday the 22d. The convoy had made only 880 miles as the other vessels constantly slowed down to enable the *President Grant* to keep up with them. It was hoped that her injuries could be repaired by her engineers. But, instead, the conditions became worse and worse; she lost instead of gaining speed. The zone of submarine operations would soon be reached and then speed would be the vital factor of safety. There was only one thing to do; the *President Grant* must turn back and allow the other vessels to pursue their way. One evening, Mills and his comrades going on deck after dinner found the moon shining on the wrong side of the ship; they were on their way back to New York. They dropped anchor in the Bay on the 27th; it had taken them five days to return over the distance that they had made in three going out! To complete the story of the *President Grant*, she was sent to the Brooklyn Navy Yard for repairs, was laid up for several weeks, then resumed navigation as a transport and served until the close of the war.

Of the 168th, the First and Third battalions were sent back to Camp Mills. The Second under Major Claude M. Stanley landed on Governor's Island and was cantoned



there for nearly a month before its final departure for Europe. Mills made many visits to the city and spent many pleasant hours with his fiancée, his family and his friends. Many of the latter visited him in his quarters. It was a period, on the whole, of tranquil enjoyment, strangely tinged with uneasiness and uncertainty.



## CHAPTER VIII

A CHEERFUL VOYAGE TOWARD THE UNKNOWN—SOUL OF AN AMERICAN CRUSADER—WARTIME TYPES ON AN ATLANTIC LINER—IN A BRITISH REST CAMP.

MILLS saw his parents, his fiancée and some of his nearest friends for the last time on November 22, 1917. He spent the evening at his parents' home on Washington Heights, New York. The next day, the 23d, his battalion and the machine gun company of the 168th sailed for Europe on the steamship *Baltic* of the White Star line. Before leaving Governor's Island he wrote a short letter to his mother, in which he said:

That bed roll of mine will be like Santa's pack or Swiss Family Robinson's ship. I'll get everything out of it from cigarettes to cook stoves. I haven't any idea what all is in it.

My friend whom I was to chase out of camp is sticking right along with me to-day, so maybe we are to have a new mascot in the place of the little dog that started over with us before on the *Grant*. Maybe the little fellow was the jinx.

Got a good night's sleep, and am feeling fine. Do not worry about Mr. Vierick's *Fatherland*, for it has been suppressed, and we will not get even a glimpse of it. I mean just that, literally: We will not see it. So don't worry. Lots of love for Dad, yourself and the cats.

He wrote a second note on the same evening, apparently after he went on board the ship:

DEAR MOTHER:—I forgot to thank you last night for the sweater and wristlets, but you know I appreciate them.



How many wristlets you made! They will comfort lots of fellows.

"My friend," the dog, was separated from us by a harsh order forbidding mascots, but we have a monkey who wears a gray sweater, and is as sleek as Sweet, to entertain us.

I certainly am comfortably fixed. Hope you and Dad continue well, and that you will both be sensible and refrain from worrying about me—I assure you there is no occasion for worry.

Much love.

QUINCY.

At the same time he wrote another note which was addressed to his parents but was placed in charge of the War Department to be forwarded to them as soon as the *Baltic's* safe arrival was cabled over. This was the regular practice in order to give the earliest news to relatives without putting into circulation any dangerous information as to the movement of troops. Mills's note read thus:

ON BOARD S. S. BALTIC, November 23, 1917.

DEAR MOTHER:—This line will let you know that we have arrived safely somewhere on the other side.

You will be overjoyed to learn, I know, that we are on a ship this time which is manned by experienced salts. Even the cabin boys are hardened sailors—to let them tell it. This ship is far superior in accommodations to the *Grant*, and I am sure that the voyage will be as comfortable as well as safe as possible. Much love. QUINCY.

The voyage was over, of course, when the note was delivered, but the word as to its comfort enhanced the pleasure caused by its safe ending.

Quincy Sharpe Mills was now thirty-four years old, less two months. His character was mature; his performance was considerable; his promise very large. His nature was a



singular and happy compound of serious aim and view with gayety and enjoyment of life. He was so much of a materialist as wisely to extract from the passing days, from various experiences, all the pleasure that they could be made afford; but the very enterprise upon which he was launched demonstrated how much his spirituality dominated all earthy values and impulses in his soul. When truth, honor, manhood, patriotism, were in the balance, no consideration of personal safety, no selfish interest, not even the feelings of those whom he held dearer than himself, could shake his resolution or turn him from his chosen path of duty.

Mills had no expectation of returning from the war alive. He seems to have had a premonition of his end. He told his father not to expect his return. He spoke to friends in the office of *The Evening Sun* of his fate as a matter of very great probability. The accounts of his talk given by his comrades in the 168th all bear out this view. He constantly expected death. He was almost surprised when after each action he came out unharmed. His intimates marvelled and made something of a jest of his expectancy—in war, even death becomes a semi-humorous phenomenon.

But he was never afraid, nor reluctant, nor hesitant in any way; nor did he desire death, nor did he become in any sense morbid on the subject. His cheerfulness was remarkable. He was always either placid or in high spirits. The shadow which he felt in no way darkened his days. The fatalistic attitude which he spoke of in the letter from Camp Mills, quoted in the preceding chapter, perhaps, explains best his state of mind.

In stature he was of medium height or slightly below it, slenderly built, but with well-hardened muscles and healthy organs which gave him activity and high endurance. His face was oval with well-marked features.



His eyes had an unusually luminous quality which always gave character and interest to his expression; in mirth, they lit up with an irresistibly infectious sparkle. As a civilian, he wore his hair rather longer than is usual among young New Yorkers; it had a natural wave and contributed to give him a somewhat poetic or artistic guise. When he donned the army uniform he had it trimmed short and wore it in the so-called "Pompadour" fashion, brushed straight up from his forehead. The new style suited him wonderfully well. It imparted a peculiarly alert and clean-cut aspect, always mellowed and animated by the slumbering fire in his eyes. He was as fine a sample of young manhood, as handsome a champion of light as even romance could consecrate to an ideal.

The mind and spirit within were worthy of the containing form. He has been shown as a lifelong student of principles and contender for high things—for political purity in peace and patriotic devotion in war. In his inward self he was a lover of poetry, a seeker for philosophic truth, a devotee of music. He was saturated with family affection; he had the qualities of an ardent lover; he was a sincere friend; he was an aggressive foe but only on the merits of an issue joined; he was an entertaining companion; as a worker, he was untiring and effective. His wide range of interests, his quick mind and ready gift of words made his conversation uncommonly agreeable. He was fond of little children and easily made friends with them. He was an intense admirer of nature in all its aspects and he had a natural sympathy with the lower animals; his quaint addiction to cats has already been revealed. He often had a pocketful of sugar to give to horses in the street.

He had strong will power and much command over his own inclinations. Though not a total abstainer on principle, he gave up the use of liquor for long periods. He did



that much more difficult thing of using it occasionally while generally refraining. It has been seen how he gave up smoking for a period as a health measure. In early life he was so fond of cards that his mother and grandmother feared a gambling instinct, but no such thing ever developed. The attraction to him was in the mental exercise and this presently drew him to chess playing, in which he acquired fair skill.

For his years and considering the time and effort he had given to an arduous calling, he had done a large amount of reading and study. Browning was his favorite poet, but he also reveled in the works of Kipling, Wordsworth, Keats and Byron. In college, he wrote a critical and biographical essay on Poe. Of the very modern verse makers, Masfield was his favorite. His copy of Browning is extensively marked; *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came* was his favorite poem, but *Evelyn Hope* with its suggestion of a long future of effort and reward also appealed to his temperament. One line of *The Pope* is specially underscored in his much scored copy:

And makes the stumbling block the stepping stone.

In the margin, Mills has written: "Almost the whole philosophy of Browning summed up in this line." It was largely Mills's own philosophy too.

Among the early prose works that influenced him, Wundt's *Principles of Morality* has been mentioned. One passage, on page 210 of his edition, is doubly marked for reference. It has a bearing on his fate, so marked that it must be quoted in part as giving a clue to his state of mind:

There is but one civic duty that possesses in the highest degree the property of arousing, by the kind of activity it requires, sentiments of self-sacrifice that are strong enough to restrain the opposite inclinations. . . . This is the duty



of military service for one's country, and it involves one of the greatest of political rights, that of protecting the State and of using force as a necessary means to this end, a means forbidden to the peaceful citizen.

Plato's *Republic* influenced his political ideals in a marked degree and Victor Hugo's *Intellectual Autobiography* colored all his thought. The dictum "Man has need of dreams," underscored in his copy, is suggestive of his own internal consciousness. Again this line, "In the end, the tomb is always in the right," fits in with the mood in which he went to France, as again does this vital query: "What is death for man? Is it truly the end of something? Is it the end of all?" Also this word of hope: "At death man ends, the soul begins!" Of such questions and such hopes was Mills's soul compounded. In the last two years or so of his life he fell under the spell of Montaigne, who became his constant intellectual companion. He dipped into the essays every night at bedtime as other men might into the Bible. Here again the discussion of death and the great mystery fascinated him, as in Chapter XVIII, the story of Cræsus and his theory of happiness and in XIX the quotations from Cicero: "To study philosophy is nothing but to prepare ourselves to die," and "All the wisdom and reasoning in the world do in the end conclude in this point, to teach us not to fear to die."

Mills took but three books to France with him, Montaigne, the *Rubaiyat* and Kipling's poems. When his trunks were returned, they contained also a copy of Marcus Aurelius, which he must have bought over there. He wrote home in April or May, 1918, asking his mother to make a copy of *Childe Roland* for him. She had a typewritten one made and sent it to him.

Of Mills's own thoughts on life and death there is slight record outside his letters. In his diary for 1911, on Janu-



ary 2, after seeing the play, *Old Heidleberg*, he wrote: "The only one that has brought tears to my eyes. The effect was not due so much to the power of the play as to the vividness with which it illustrated the transitory nature of things in life." Besides the diaries, there is a rough notebook with pages of books to be read, topics for articles, words and things to look up, quotations of strong suggestion and the like. It contains some apothegms apparently his own. The very first is light: "Why should I not steal a kiss? (playful note);" but this is grave enough: "Do not ask for genius but for power and strength to work hard—to bear the brunt and smile."

He was not addicted to the ordinary curiosities regarding things mechanical; he rather took them for granted. An entry in his diary, however, made October 29, 1910, shows a lively interest in aviation. It reads: "Saw aeroplanes in flight at Belmont Park; my first look at them and I want to try it. There is something that grips you in the roar of the engines overhead." It would seem the call was to his imagination rather than to any material instinct. In all the spiritual and temperamental phases of life, however, his visions and desires were warm and vivid. These were crowned with the hope of love and domesticity, to which allusion has already been made, but which is too delicate a matter for more than indication here as a supreme factor in that sacrifice which was his departure for the unknown, the fatal, the humanly final, with his regiment on the *Baltic*.

From the first he made a strong impression of ability and will power upon his brother officers of all ranks. This was soon supplemented by cordial liking and in several cases by close friendship. His spirit of fair play was recognized; his entertaining talk and wide fund of information caused his companionship to be sought. "He was a good man to be with when we struck a new place," said



one of them later; "he always knew something interesting about it." His cheerfulness was inspiring to his comrades and his men. Only the imperfect equipment of the troops in the early part of the campaign caused him any anxiety. This he viewed with a critical bitterness which was as much editorial as military. Altogether, he was successful as an army officer—active, vigilant, strict, well informed and well drilled, obedient and enforcing obedience, considerate, genial. He was popular as well as efficient—rather because he was efficient.

The second voyage, the real journey to Europe and the battle area, was far different from the first. The *Baltic* was a passenger ship and the private soldiers of Mills's battalion, as he wrote to a friend, enjoyed better quarters on her than the officers had had on the *President Grant*. But at this point he begins to tell his own story in his own way.

The remainder of this book will consist principally of narrative of his experiences and observations in the campaign of 1917-18. It is found in the series of letters which he wrote to his father and mother down to the eve of his death. Writing them seems to have been his principal recreation. They exhibit his remarkable gift for journalism, indeed for literature—he would have been a star as a war correspondent. One novel quality they have in particular: they give the personal side of the soldier's life, the phase the makers of books generally miss. Unconsciously, they are a wonderful tribute to the courage and moral tone of the American troops, including their portrayer himself. It must be generally understood that these letters were full of personal mention. All sorts of intimate things were discussed, intensely interesting to him, his family and his immediate circle, and showing that his heart was always at home, always with those he loved



and liked, and that his appreciation of any kindness was as keen and simple as a child's. These have been omitted for reasons that every reader will easily conceive. Some bitter comments there were also on acquaintances who did not live up to his ideal of them or of their duty. These, too, have generally been expunged, though one or two are left in order that his state of mind may be made clear. In these latter cases, the identity of the objects of his censure is suppressed.

With the exceptions thus noted, the letters are given exactly as he wrote them; the editing of them has been confined to rare verbal corrections such as he would have made himself had there been leisure to read them before mailing. In accordance with the War Department regulations, no indication was given in any of the exact place from which it was sent. The two which follow were written at sea, on the way over. Names of places which Mills was obliged to leave blank in these as well as in following letters have been supplied in brackets. The first letter was not dated; some opportunity, apparently, was found to send it home, en route. The second was mailed immediately upon the arrival of the *Baltic* in port on the other side:

DEAR MOTHER:—I hope that by this time your apprehensions regarding the present stage of my military experience may have been entirely relieved. You see, you had your wish about the manner of my going over. This is a larger ship than the [*President Grant*] and is a very steady sailer. She is really a palace in comparison with the preceding sardine box ship into which we were packed. Even the private soldiers have staterooms—unpretentious quarters but comfortable—and there is plenty of deck-room. Best of all, there is plenty of light at night in staterooms, smoking rooms and all other parts of the ship



where the illumination can be concealed, so our evenings are not useless and intolerable. Which only goes to prove my contention all along that equal safety could have been secured on the [*President Grant*] without plunging her into Cimmerian darkness at sunset.

The food is excellent, even better than the [*President Grant's*] and there is plenty of it. Thus far, moreover, it has proved of real benefit to the eaters, for the sea is so calm that no one has yet suffered from seasickness. We have been more than fortunate in the weather we have drawn. That is remarkable, for bad weather is to be expected at this season.

This letter is being written in sections. This pencil part begins at noon of the first day out. I will write as much as possible before to-morrow so that if the opportunity comes then to send letters back I may give you quite a fat one. I am in hopes that if I turn it over unsealed for censorship it may be forwarded at once without waiting for the arrival of the ship on the other side.

In regard to letters: You should number each letter you mail me as I have numbered this one at the top of the first page. Number your letters consecutively for each month, and then start over again, and I will do the same. In this manner we will be able to tell whether all of our letters arrive. Some will be bound to miss, owing to mishaps to the ships they are on, or to confusion in the handling of the mails.

I will not hear from you for some weeks, I know, but when our mail ship comes in I hope to be swamped with letters. It will be better for you to mail three letters a week, so that though one or two miss one may come through, and I will keep the chain going in your direction in the same way.

Here's the chance to mail this, so I must stop.

Much love to Dad and yourself,

QUINCY.



ON BOARD S. S. [BAL TIC],

November 26, 1917.

DEAR MOTHER: Well! Well! So here I am, headed out through a driving snowstorm over a no man's sea, cleared from a port of nowhere and bound for a port of nowhere—so far as you may know.

The whole adventure makes me think of one of Dunsany's weird little stories in which he talks, in his mystic way, of the City of Nowhere in the Land of Never Was. I hope that we may have the great pleasure of being blessed together with seeing other plays from his gifted pen even more masterly than *The Queen's Enemies* and *The Gods of the Mountain*—that we may see them together in the great City of Somewhere at the mouth of the Hudson which looms up through the mist of my dreams to the stern of us, as strange and magical as any dream pile built by Dunsany's Irish pen that is truly great in that it is not Irish but elemental.

I fell to thinking when we started forth to-day on our real journey across the Atlantic of how strange it was that I should be entering on this new phase of my life through a snowstorm; you have told me that it was in a time of snowstorm that I was born. There are strange coincidences in life which are no doubt but accidents, but are, nevertheless, more than interesting to the mind which is curious about that part of our existence here that is more than physical. And this sailing into an unknown sea to an unapproachable future is in itself a new birth from a life in a metropolitan office.

A very interesting ship's company I am associating with while aborning, too, from the old lady with the gray hair who smokes endless cigarettes from a meerschaum cigarette holder, to the diminutive "boots" in tightfit blue navy duds and brass buttons, both quite English, donchano, and both quite severe about it. The old lady I



picked out as soon as I came aboard as being the most interesting individual on the ship. She is a very Queen Elizabeth sort of person who looks as though she would certainly be able to blurt out her big, big D— on occasion. She wears rings on her fingers and maybe on her toes and she surely has diamonds wherever she goes. It is really quite a shock to see her settle herself in a corner of the writing room, and, after lighting up a cigarette and giving the assembled company a sort of eagle-eyed once-over as if she were looking for some head to chop off, produce her knitting from somewhere and apply herself to a pursuit really feminine. Who she is I don't know, but I'll find out later and write in her name. I think she must have escaped from either Bill Shakespeare or Bernard Shaw while they weren't looking and maybe I'll have to put her back into her proper place after the war's over. She's worth it, all right.

Then there is the little Scotchman who is a dead ringer for Andy Carnegie, and the brave mother who is traveling all the way from China to England with four small children. Why she should be at sea at such a time as this I cannot comprehend, but I'll find that out, too, and tell you. Cyril Asquith is one of the passengers—there is quite a number of Canadian and English officers—being on his way home from Washington where he has been on some sort of official mission. He devotes himself assiduously to chess with several select cronies and maintains a proper distance from the ordinary herd. What struck me most forcibly at the start was the number of women and children aboard. After all I had heard about how women and children were excluded from trans-Atlantic travel this surprised me greatly. I'll find out later why it is the case on this ship.

LATER—The mother of four children is the wife of an English missionary who has been devoting himself for



years to saving Chinese souls, but is now applying himself to a much more practical missionary work on Germans in France. She is going home principally because of the bad health of her oldest child, but I cannot understand why it would not have been better for her to get medical advice in the U. S. There is not a person aboard who is not personally connected with the war in some way. Most of the women are the wives of Canadian or British officers. One of them is a young woman going over to marry a Canadian major. Another, with whom I fell to talking, is a Southern woman from Louisville, Ky., whose husband is a Britisher and who is going over after some fifteen years in America to do his bit for his country. They have their baby with them.

Then there is an English gentleman, an exporter of fine textiles, who is just finishing his 100th trip across the Atlantic. He is taking a fatherly interest in me because he has two sons, both of whom are in service. Their father complains bitterly that he can't be with them because the doctors say he is "too damned old." The older boy, a lieutenant in the Royal Engineers, has been with the colors since 1915, and is to-day no worse for wear although he has had a handful of shrapnel scooped out of his anatomy by the doctors once or twice. The other boy, just 16, couldn't wait to grow up to military age so he just entered the naval service voluntarily. The father has given me much valuable advice about trench boots, flannel underwear, etc., and has promised me his son's prescription for keeping vermin as near subjection as may be. "You can't keep 'em off," says Dad. "When the boy comes home on furlough he won't come into the house until he has bathed and disinfected out in the wood-shed."

Then there is the little English officer who saw service as an aviator on the first day of the war, and who has been at the front a total of two years. He has been recently



detailed to instruct our aviators in America, but is now bound back to do real flying again. "Keep your head down and do as you're told and your name will never appear in the casualty lists," he says. I was much disappointed to hear from him that the large losses at Vimy Ridge last summer were due to the same old irrepressible desire of the British territorials to overreach the mark and take more than the ground assigned to them. "When the barrage is properly put down," this long-lived Englishman says, "it is a pipe to take the trenches allotted to you. It's so easy you just want to keep right on walking through Hans and Fritz—but you don't try to do it but once. Get your men to realize that they must never go further than they are told if they want to go back to the States." Believe me, I had started that line of talk the day I hit the organization; I am merely adding emphasis now. As for keeping my head down—my nose will be right down in the dirt when orders do not force me to carry it higher.

There are lots of British soldiers still in action who have been in for the whole war. The chief petty officer tells me that his brother-in-law and his pal, field artillerymen, have come through it all practically unscathed, winning thereby the name of "the lucky beggars."

As for the submarine menace, you really wouldn't know there was any from the stolid fashion the ship's crew go about their business. Being torpedoed has got to be a habit with them, from the captain, who was torpedoed on the *Arabic*, to the stewards. My mess steward has been torpedoed twice, on the *Laurentic* and the *Nicosian*, and my room steward was torpedoed on the *Britannic* in the Mediterranean. And I'll venture that it never occurred to any of them to quit seafaring. They are woodenly indifferent, being torpedoed is just like serving the soup with them. They torpedo their H's ruthlessly and without warning. Henglish as she is spoke is a frightfulness sure



enough. I sometimes wonder what it is all about. And I'm afraid I'll brain my bathroom steward yet some day when he appears in the doorway and informs me that "Your bawth is ready, leftenant, sir." The cats, even, are English in their general aloofness. Ginger, the tortoiseshell tabby who rides first cabin, permits no liberties from anyone, and you might think tiger Jack a duke from his bearing although he is booked permanently in the second cabin. Both were born aboardship, and their offspring are all seafarers on other vessels.

Speaking of young Asquith, to whom I referred in an earlier chapter, he bears a remarkable resemblance to the pictures of his father. He is not over tall, suggests frailness by general appearance: attenuated fingers and face, the latter almost wan in its pallor, and a habit of wearing a big coat of much the same build as my sheep-skin jacket at all times, even when he is sitting here in the writing-smoking room playing chess or reading.

Here, in this continuous dissertation on life and things aboard ship, I will weave a Thanksgiving carol. Take my word for it, this bunch, after its previous experience afloat, is thankful for pretty much everything in sight. They all agree they are enjoying soldiering *de luxe*. Anybody in the ranks who started complaining about anything would be thrown overboard by his fellows. They had turkey and cranberries, potatoes, peas and plum pudding for noon mess. In all 2200 lbs. of the American bird were served for the soldiers on this ship alone. Our big dinner came at night and the menu set before us was as follows:

Blue Points on the half shell; Consommé Florida, Potage St. Louis; Salmon Trout California; Mutton Cutlets America; Prime Ribs and Sirloin of Beef, New England Pudding; Roast Turkey, Cranberry Jelly; Wax Beans, Browned Potatoes, Plain Boiled Rice; Salad, Boston



beans with Mayonnaise dressing and lettuce; New Hampshire Pudding, Congress Tartlets; Fruits, Nuts; Coffee, New Orleans.

This bill was in no wise better than our regular fare, however. We are certainly living high. Sometimes we meet old acquaintances under strange disguises between the soup and the demi-tasse, however. For instance, there was the "Royal Sea Pie" we ordered today, being inveigled into selecting it by the high-sounding name.

"Hell!" said Lt. Kelly (he who was arrested five times in one day in Tokio) when our portions were set before us, "I was aboard a transport in the middle of the Pacific bound for the Philippines nineteen years ago this Thanksgiving Day and we had 'Royal Sea Pie' every meal—only we called it, 'slumgullion.'"

You would have recognized the dish as plain Irish stew. So are the lowly exalted on shipboard—and it was good stew, too.

Here's how I spent my Thanksgiving Day, the routine being practically the same as that for every day, except that ordinarily we have an hour's officer's school instead of church at 3 P.M.: Up at 7:45 for my "bawth" in sea water, comfortably heated; 8 o'clock, breakfast; 9-10, getting the men's quarters cleaned up; 10-10:30, setting up exercises; 10:30-12:30, visiting and talking with the men below decks; 1 o'clock, lunch; 2:30, boat drill; 3 o'clock, Thanksgiving service, held by an Episcopal minister from the first cabin; 4-6, cards and chess; 6-7, cleaning up for dinner; 7, dinner; 8-10:30, writing or playing cards. Every little while throughout this program we pause for an extra bite to eat. They serve clam broth on the sun deck every so often, and at 5 P.M. "tay" is served here in the library. Right after dinner you get a demi-tasse here with your



cigar—smoking is prohibited in the dining saloon—and I always get mine here because the coffee is better than that downstairs. And along about 10 P.M. the steward passes around sandwiches.

I haven't been seasick yet, although the sea has been a bit rough more than once, but I've come pretty near to eating myself sick several times. My fellow officers wonder "what the devil I find to write so much about"—but it's all in the point of view. There is more than I can write about. But I mustn't omit the incident of the Sam Browne belts. You remember these Iowans decried the Sam Browne belts in much the same fashion as "Cyclone" Davis decried the linen collar on first hitting Washington. But just as Jeff submitted to being properly collared before retiring to the wilds of Texas so the Iowans have submitted to being properly harnessed in Sam Browne belts. More than that, they actually jumped into the harness on the first excuse, and some of those who had held the Sam Browne in the deepest contempt were the first and eagerest jumpers. You see it's this way: The belt is required for all officers of the Allied Armies so that the soldiers of all nations may be able to recognize officers of other nations and show them the proper military courtesies. I had supposed that the belt was merely an adornment, but it is a necessity, as has been proven by experience, to prevent confusion within the Allies' complex military machine.

Personally, I think that the added "set up" which the belt gives to the American officer would justify its use if there was no real necessity for it. In the same manner, I think it is short-sighted policy that the American private soldier's uniform is not so well made and of such good material as to inspire him with pride in his personal appearance, as the Canadian uniform does the men who wear it. The American uniform is too much like a suit of



overalls, and naturally it is treated as overalls will always be treated. This is not right.

To get off on another tack again, here is what my English friend had to say to me today, he whose son is a lieutenant in the Royal Engineers: "When you get to England you will find the people who are really mad about this war. They are the English women. They are actually doing the work of the nation; it couldn't keep the war going without them. Those women are working because their husbands and sons and sweethearts are in the trenches and need their support. And you deprive a bunch of women of their sweethearts and they are like a bunch of mad cats—they want to scratch every body in sight. Wait until your American women really know what it means to be so deprived and you will find out what sort of stuff they are really made of. This war is making out of our women what suffrage could never make out of them: real thinking citizens who realize how vital is their interest in their government." This from a man engaged in running an international business is interesting. The women will prove themselves worthy of their rights in spite of the Jeannette Rankins.

I spoke of spending time talking with the men, and in relation to this I know you will be interested to hear more of the big sergeant, Phil. Koester, whose appearance you liked so much. Incidentally, I was glad he was assigned to my lifeboat for obvious reasons. Koester tells me that his parents were born in Germany and that his father is as pro-German in sympathy as most of them. His service in the U. S. Army is a great blow to his father, he says, as five of his (the sergeant's) uncles and many cousins are in the German service. There is nothing wrong about the son's mental processes, though. He is straight American in his utterances and I am sure that he is sincere. I have a lot of fun out of another German-American sergeant in



our company named Maus; the Teutonic pronunciation of which is *mouse*. It is too funny for anything that this man should be not only small and suggestive in appearance of Krazy Kat's arch enemy in the *Evening Journal*, but is equally as belligerent as that terror of the electrotypes. I call him "Sergeant Ignatz" sometimes but he doesn't catch on, of course. Had he gone to a New York public school Ignatz would have been the only name he would ever have heard. Like Koester, he is a good soldier.

Since starting on our voyage we have had a little bit of every sort of weather in King Winter's pack, from mild moonlight and smooth sea to what the sailor folk term tonight "'arf a gale"—which a large percentage of the landlubbers aboard view as more nearly approximating a gale and a 'arf—right off the ice, with waves smashing over the bow and spray flying the whole length of the boat. Every time the old girl sticks her nose down into the Atlantic she pauses perceptibly, then shivers all through as if she were blowing the water out of her nostrils, and lunges forward again. It is a motion not without a certain inspiration—unless it makes you seasick by constant and persistent repetition. Personally, I hope that the wind will blow harder and harder on each successive day until we reach port, for the harder the wind the rougher the sea and the less the chance for some dear little U-boat to tickle our ribs. The ideal trip would be one on which we saw a U-boat blown out of the water 'fore it could get us. Next to that, the best thing is no periscope sighted at all. But if one is sighted we apprehend no danger; our convoy is sufficient.

We had a talk today from Col. S. Wishart, who has been training English officers and who suggested several things for American officers to note particularly. Col. Wishart has organized two artillery brigades, but because he is 60 he was not allowed to go to the front. He would pass



for 50, and he is so mad about being kept out of active service that I wouldn't be at all surprised to hear of his busting right through Von Hindenburg's line single-handed and capturing both the Kaiser and Berlin before tiffin some fine day.

To return to the subject of the ship's cats, you certainly would have laughed the first day we sailed into the submarine zone when Ginger walked into the dining saloon equipped, as everybody else was, with a cork jacket. One of the stewardesses had made it for her, and while the cat kept her ears laid back all the time, denoting acute displeasure, she wore the thing with wonderful composure. I would surely like to see Sweet so equipped. If he couldn't shake the life preserver off he'd just about dive over the rail to try it out. Ginger is a pretty slick article. She came limping in to dinner last night as if somebody had nearly mashed her foot off. Naturally everybody fed her up in sympathy—and after she'd got the last bite of chicken in sight she walked out of the place waving her tail over four as sound feet as you ever saw, and wearing on her countenance an expression suggesting close kinship between herself and the cat that ate the canary. "Bless you!" said one of the stewards to me: "We think as much of that cat as we do of one of ourselves." She is about 5 years old and Sweet's general build.

This continues to grow words day by day, this rambling epistle of mine. Now I must tell you about a little Frenchman, a sergeant-major in our service. His name is Alfred Gay, and his father, a French general, was killed, he says at Verdun. He has lost several brothers and other relations, all colonels and majors, and was wounded five times himself, being retired three times on account of wounds. And it's three times and out in the French service, so he came to America and took a non-commissioned officer's job although he was a captain when he was



relieved from further service for his country. Listen to what he says: "Ze fighting, zat ees not ze hard sing. Oh! no. Eet ees ze living in ze dugout and ze ditch in ze rain and ze mud and ze snow, and ze bugs—and eespec-i-allee ze bugs. Ze real fighting ees not wis ze Gairmans but wis ze bugs. Every morning you fight heem. You take off your shirt and you fight heem. And who ees ze greatest soldair? Ze greatest soldair ees he who keels ze most bugs. Hah!"

You see this Frenchman is just as gay as his name. But he is more or less of a crape-hanger for those superior American officers who started over with the idea that the captains and majors and colonels and generals escape, and that it's only the lieutenants who get shot up. Here's Gay, who started in as a lieutenant the first day of the war and is still as gay as ever, while his relatives of higher rank have many of them taken the count. He is as fine looking a specimen of humanity as you ever saw, even if he has a bullet of some sort packed away somewhere in one of the cartilages of his heart. He is a physician of real skill, and speaks about every language on the list. Because he is not an American citizen he cannot hold a commission in our army, but I have a notion that some means of making real use of his talents instead of wasting them on a non-com's position will be found.

It is something of a coincidence again, that I am finishing this letter on your birthday, Dec. 6. I mailed you another en route, which I hope has reached you already, and I have also filed a cablegram which should satisfy you that my voyage was all that could be desired. I will write as often as I can, be sure of that, and you do the same—*and don't worry.*

With much love for Dad and yourself and the rest of the family,

QUINCY.



The *Baltic* entered the Mersey and steamed up to Liverpool on December 7. She lay in the stream until high tide and docked on the 8th. The voyage had been uneventful. Not even the fin of a U-boat was seen. The next letter Mills had doubtless begun to write while the vessel was in the stream, but apparently he concluded it after landing:

WHERE? [Probably WINCHESTER]

December 7, 1917.

DEAR MOTHER: Just when this will be mailed I do not know, but it will be in the nature of a Merry Christmas-Happy New Year letter, and I hope it may reach you during if not on the eve of the holiday season. You know that while I may be absent from you folks in the body I will be with you in spirit on these, the home days of all the year.

Landing here on this shore of the Atlantic, I can only say that I had never before realized how small the world is. When there are ties to your heartstrings on the other side of the ocean, time and distance assume aspects totally different. It is, after all, only a thought's distance around the earth. The thing that always made it seem so far before was that there was no one here to think about. I know by experience that this is unassailable truth; and I have no doubt that you have made the same discovery.

I sincerely trust that the means of actual physical communication will be as good as my friend Mr. D. says that they are for the English troops. He says that mail for the British troops is delivered promptly even if the men are in the first line trenches. His son has found this to be the easiest way to get clean socks and handkerchiefs, while in the first line. When he goes in, he mails a card notifying his mother to send him packages on certain days. Two days after a package leaves London, the boy gets it,



puts on his clean socks and fights Fritz in as sanitary fashion as possible.

Mr. D. has certainly been kind to me. He has offered to keep for me any excess stuff I may have on going into active service for the first period. Personal property left behind is frequently lost, his son has found. Therefore if I have anything I want taken care of at any time I will pack up a trunkful and send it to Mr. D.'s home. Whenever I want any of the articles he will send them to me one at a time. This gentleman has been so kind to me that I think it would be a graceful thing for you to write him a note thanking him for his attention. I have talked with him a lot, and have got a lot of first-hand information about the British representative system of government which strengthens me in the opinion I already held that it is both more responsive and more responsible than the American.

Mr. D. and other Englishmen I talked with aboard were as much grieved at the big Hillquit vote [in the New York Mayoralty election] as I am. They all express the opinion that this result of the New York election is one of the most sinister social indications of recent times. I must admit that sometimes I feel that the world must be coming to an end. But unless history is going to change its whole course and run contrary in the twentieth century to everything that has happened—no matter how slow it has been in happening—since the record of history began, this war will turn out right in the end as will the social mess of which the Hillquit vote is only one of the manifestations, and the world will continue to be not only habitable, but a little more so each year. Certes this is so; however: If Hun and Socialist triumph they will pull the world down on top of themselves, even as Samson pulled down the temple of the profane gods of his day.

Yes, I guess you'll have to write me down an optimist.



Of course, there is particular reason for my optimism just at this time at the conclusion of a trip through the submarine zone so peaceful that it might have been on the Great Lakes, which are certainly submarine locked, in a period of dead calm. We did have a bit of "narsty" weather—as these blooming Henglish termed it—but I didn't suffer at all from *mal-de-mer*, and didn't mind. As several of the men expressed it in letters to their folks our ship did rock like a cradle that was being handled roughly, but the rough handling only rendered the cradle safer, so the more violent the rocking the better I liked it.

I happen to know about the men's letters because I helped censor the batch that went off at the end of the voyage, and I guess I will know considerably more, as I am to be company censor when we get finally located. Pathetically elementary in many ways were the letters I read, but they came from the right kind of hearts, stout and strong and undismayed by the discomforts of troop travel, and the prospects of hardships more trying still to come. Few of the men are married, yet out of the batch of letters sent off at the port of debarkation an amazingly small proportion were to sweethearts. All the men wrote home. Their hearts were clearly there first.

It is curious how hard it is for them to write without falling foul of the censor. The things that strike them are the most obvious things that would be of most value to the enemy if divulged, and when the ban is placed on the mention of these they feel that there is nothing left for them to say. The manner in which the censorship rules cramp them is clearly evident in their expression. I have remarked before to you how like great big children they are, and I am more than ever impressed by that quality in the adult human individual. On the ship I saw a great deal of the men, and I believe that I have made many fast friends among them. Perhaps I flatter myself, but I hope



not, for I have certainly become very fond of those of my company as a whole, and of many individually.

Speaking of my optimism, it will be impossible for you to comprehend the total unconcern of everybody aboard our ship, not alone the crew who are used to the experience, regarding the U-boat. If it had not been for the life preservers which all of us had to keep with us all the time, you would not have supposed that any of us ever thought of danger. As we approached this side, the increased convoy increased our confidence, of course. There is nothing more reassuring than the sight of torpedo boat destroyers kicking up the water all around you. They are the most impudent little sea devils imaginable, regular little sauceboxes, with the fact that they are just spoiling for a U-boat scrap written all over them.

How the Huns must hate our sea power you can understand after seeing these destroyers racing around with their bows in the air hunting for trouble, and mad because they don't find it. And after seeing them operate you understand why you see no subs; it would be sure death to one to show a periscope. Could there only be enough destroyers to go 'round there would be no submarine peril for any ship. They remind you for **all** the world of a pack of rat terriers scouring about for a rat, and if they found him the shaking he got would be truly Frightful.

You see, my baptism of torpedo fire which you worried over so was nothing of an ordeal at all. Now be sensible and do not worry because after some months of training there will be another baptism of fire. The English officers tell us that the conservation of life in battle is being made more of a science every day—as it has to be—and that when the casualties are heavy it is because the infantry fails to co-operate with the artillery. Too great daring, too overwhelming a desire to get at the Huns—these are the greatest enemies to overcome. “Do what you ’re



told!" If troops can only get that beaten through their skulls they are pretty sure to retain those skulls for protracted use against Kultur. But if they insist on ramming their skulls against the Hindenburg line that line is likely to resemble a stone wall indefinitely. That it is not a stone wall when properly attacked has been proved already. The jaunty destroyer using its brains to get the U-boat, and not trying to sink dreadnaughts by ramming them, is a pretty good example for the infantry man to follow.

I am permitted to say that we landed in England, I am informed, but not to name the port. How long we shall be here I do not know but I hope it will be long enough to see something of London. Mr. D. has offered to show me and any friends I may want to bring along all of London that can be seen in whatever time we may have. He knows the city, as he has grown up in it.

My love to you and Dad for Christmas. It should be the happiest you have ever spent because you have a son in the service I am in. You will hear from me again as soon as I have the opportunity to write. QUINCY.

The second Battalion and the machine gunners were sent into quarters at Wimbledon and Morn Hill rest camps. From this location, Mills wrote another long letter:

SOMEWHERE IN ENGLAND,  
December 10, 1917.

DEAR MOTHER: Although I sent you a letter on arriving I will send you another now, for perhaps my opportunities for writing may be less after moving on. And, besides, all the letters may not reach you. I know that there is no manner in which I can spend my time that will be as valuable in that the results will mean so much to you, and, furthermore, I thoroughly enjoy writing letters. My



incurability with the pencil dumbfounds my associates. Most of them view writing a letter as an awesome task, and I really believe some of them think I must be out of my mind to be so devoted to it. As an excuse for not writing they urge that the censor won't pass the letters anyway. Which reminds me that in your answer I wish you would tell me whether my letters have been cut to any extent by the censor. I try to keep off anything that would give military information, and hope that I have succeeded in getting through un mutilated letters.

My trip through England I have enjoyed greatly, but I fear that I will miss the part most to be desired, a sight of London. From the car window en route to a rest camp here I witnessed a panorama of tidiness. The countryside was a succession of fields bounded by endless hedges laid out "just so," and of towns and cities full of rows of two-storied houses separated by narrow streets, each as neat as a pin. Every little house and garden made me look close to see if the housewife were not somewhere about still at her daily task of brushing off every shingle and vegetable with a feather duster.

I saw very little woodland and few untilled fields; those untilled were being used for grazing. In the rural districts thatched roofs were frequent, and all the haymows were built up alike, precisely like rectangular houses with steeply slanting roofs and overhanging eaves. And I am not surprised at the amount of mutton that has been fed to me since my arrival, for there were sheep everywhere. Your friend of the sheep pictures—Is it Mauve or Millet?—couldn't help finding a subject every time he turned 'round on this island. And the entire landscape, as a whole, was like a giant Corot.

I think the atmospheric conditions prevalent must produce the remarkable Corot effects. The bare brown branches of the trees assume a richness against the English



sky which I never noted in our country. It is remarkable. And I saw any number of brooks which might have been murmuring: "Men may come and men may go, but I go on forever." The little houses in the older towns you pass remind you of the Shakesperian stage settings you have seen—actually the real houses are little larger than the sham ones—and honestly it wouldn't surprise me to see some figure in doublet and hose come around any corner. All along the road were church buildings that looked old enough to have been relics of Saxon days, and every now and then we passed a crumbling stone bridge whereon it was easy to visualize men in suits of mail busy macing each other's heads off.

You should have heard the men jeer the dinky little railway coaches when we landed—engines and coaches remind you of the pictures of the first American railway trains—but they remained aboard the coaches long enough to respect them. There is no denying that the English trains move more smoothly, with less jar from the wheels, and that they get there more promptly. Mr. D. told me that it is as unusual for an English railway train to be late as for an American railway train to be on time. I must give the English full credit, too, for the way they beat us at keeping the railway right of way clear of unsightly advertising signs, and all other eyesores. With rare exceptions, the residential and factory areas immediately adjacent to the tracks we passed over were as clean as the Sage Foundation colony at Forest Hills, and not unlike it in appearance. Contrast this with the usual filthiness of any American city's railroad district.

While contrasting things English and American it is well enough to mention the girls. Our American girls "have it on" their English sisters as to pretty faces and figures, but the complexions of these English women are the most wonderful I have ever seen. The men have the



same rosy cheeks. Maybe it's the English climate, which certainly needs some redeeming feature, for it is as generous with fog as you have heard. While there has been no rain since our arrival, the air has been so heavy with mist as to keep the roads in a continual muddy paste, which we are told will last until summer, except when frozen. With all the lights out because of the air raid danger, you simply cannot walk abroad at night without bumping into other pedestrians. Under the circumstances it is fortunate that the roads and streets are devoid of practically all save military vehicular traffic. As to temperature, the weather is less cold than raw.

To digress back to the girl subject, you have no notion how attractive is this Billy Burke pajama costume worn by the British factory girl. No matter how homely she is, this costume gives a girl a winsomeness which the pictures reproduced in the American newspapers fail wholly to convey. When American working girls catch on to this, I expect fully that they will wear their pajamas even to and from work on the L and subway trains.

The restriction on the ration supply here makes you realize at once that the country is at war. You are familiar with my appetite, so it is sufficient for me to say that by eating tea at 5 yesterday and dinner right afterward I managed to get enough to sustain life overnight. Just so much and no more may be served to each person at each meal, and the portions are rather meagre. If you lick the platter clean, there is enough for the time being, but you are hungry before the next meal. When Broadway is restricted to this extent Broadway will be fighting mad—and the sooner the better. For Americans do not yet realize that they are at war. In this regard, I want to say that if you wish to send me presents that will be appreciated just mail me a pound tin of coffee now and then. The coffee we get here is just about on a par with the South's



Civil War coffee, and we are advised that the further east we go the worse the decoction gets. The dearth of tobacco is also very apparent already, so if you will mail me a box of cigars every now and then they will come in handy.

I went to church yesterday at Winchester Cathedral, which is one of the oldest religious edifices in the country, I think, and is of the Norman type of architecture, massive and cold, particularly as to the impression given by the interior. I had a meal, also, at an inn said to have been once a hostelry patronized by William the Conqueror, and the interior, with massive hewn oak rafters, certainly appears old enough to have been here in his time. The main road by here was built originally by Cæsar's legionaries. So you see we are on historic ground. Our quarters are in what the English call "huts," which are actually very comfortable concrete and galvanized iron barracks. We are two in a room, with iron beds, a washstand, shelves and a miniature Franklin heater which can make more heat on less fuel than any stove I ever saw. There are several organizations of women, enlisted for such military service as they can perform, in the vicinity, and they are certainly a cheerful and healthy looking lot. Also, they seem to make Tommy Atkins's lot much more cheerful.

The English are working batches of German prisoners all about, and while the Fritzes are a strong enough looking bunch, many of them are undersized, and a great many of them are around the 40-year mark. They haven't by any means the Prussian Guard appearance of formidableness.

The hardest part of my journey has been that I haven't got any mail, and I figure out that it will probably be three weeks yet before I receive any. But I hope that when the letters do start the chain will be uninterrupted. As I have told you before, you and Dad must not worry about me,



for I am in the best of health, and am having an experience that is a privilege.

I almost forgot to say that the soldier who takes care of these quarters has a coal black kitten which isn't suffering any from the food conservation campaign. Lots of love to both of you—and don't worry.

QUINCY.



## CHAPTER IX

AT LAST IN FRANCE—QUAINT AND GRIM HABITATIONS IN A GLITTERING  
WINTER LANDSCAPE—LANGRES AND FORT DE PEIGNEY—FRIENDLY  
FRENCH RELATIONS.

THE Battalion entrained for Southampton on December 12. It was put on board the side-wheel steamer *La France* and safely taken across the Channel to Havre. There it was quartered in Rest Camp No. 2, described by a brother officer as made up of "tiny conical tents of the type the English use in Egypt and India—not more than ten feet in diameter; twelve men to each tent."

Mills wrote home that very evening:

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE, December 12, 1917.

MY DEAR MOTHER: It is such a curious coincidence that I cannot help calling your attention to the fact that just seven months ago to-day I began my military life in dead earnest by reporting for training at Plattsburg. And here I am behind the lines along with many other Americans getting ready to make it very unpleasant for the apostles of Kultur, who are now clearly preparing to "end the war" again this coming summer. I have kept posted on the news, and am aware that the Tuetons plan to use Austrian troops again as they did at Verdun, on the Western front. But I think I can say without danger of violating any military confidence that from what I have seen in the short time I have been here of the state of preparedness on this side of the Hindenburg line I have



no apprehension lest any new German offensive may succeed.

Curiously enough, too, I fail to descend to any great depths of despair over the Russo-Rumanian situation. It is undeniably bad, but I do not believe that the Huns will be able to organize the Russian resources for their own use to any great extent for the reason that, in the nature of things, Russia must remain in a state of political flux for some time to come. And ultimately, I believe, the Russians will quit fighting among themselves and turn on the Germans again. You cannot attribute my view to optimism solely, for I continue firm in the conviction that the trend of history making is always in the right direction and cannot be reversed, although it may seem sometimes to be arrested.

From what I note of conditions here I judge that France, instead of being "bled white," has left in her yet enough strength and fight to stage a world-Thermopylæ should it be necessary, and that she has what is much more necessary: the will to fight to the end. I have seen some fine specimens of French manhood doing guard duty, and it goes without saying that if there are such men for service behind the lines they are not lacking for the trenches.

I am in a rest camp temporarily, far behind the lines, but the place has the reality of war about it. All day you can hear the reports of great gun firing at target and testing work, and always there are dirigibles and airplanes circling overhead. These dirigibles at a distance produce the uncanny appearance of great insect bodies sweeping along through the air without wings to bear them up, and you keep looking for the supporting planes. The gas bags are of colors which make them resemble bodies of nice fat giant moths in mottling as well as in shape.

I am writing in a long, low-ceilinged room used as an English officers' club. It is very cozy and comfortable,



with plenty of heat and light, writing tables and wicker lounging chairs around the big heater in the center. Altogether, I find the living conditions much more agreeable than the food, which tends too much to the bread, tea and jam order, and too little to meats. For this reason I shall be mighty glad to get back again to the American army ration.

While I have been writing here two British aviators, each with a decoration of some sort, have sat down opposite me to do a bit of writing. Decorations are the order all around, and I guess it will not be long before American uniforms will be similarly ornamented.

The weather tends to cold and crispness, but is very pleasant, and my health is everything that could be desired.

For the present I must close with the repeated injunction that you are not to worry. Tell — that we will undoubtedly have a Christmas tree, and that I will hang her presents to me on it. The men are well, having stood their journey remarkably well. I send much love for Dad and yourself, and regards to all my friends.

QUINCY.

December 13, 1917.

DEAR MOTHER AND DAD:—I can certify to the fact that the English Channel deserves all the reputation it has earned for general rough-and-rowdiness. Having crossed it without being at all seasick I suppose I can now consider myself immune against that malady. But it was well enough that someone wasn't sick, for as a rule every man collapsed right where he was and remained until we hit port. I wrote you, I believe, that on our way across the Atlantic our ship did pretty much everything but loop the loop in the air; well, I believe the channel boat we were



on added that stunt as a climax. It certainly thought nothing at all of standing right upon end and shaking its bow at the zenith. The men are thanking their stars that they have no more sea travel ahead of them, but no doubt when they become acquainted with trench mud they will "holler" to be aboard ship and roll around in the scuppers again.

It seems odd that the British postal system accepts mail from American soldiers without any charge. When we landed in England it cost us only two cents to send letters across the ocean through the civil P. O. And back in the U. S. it cost three cents to send a letter merely across the Hudson from Jersey City to New York. The farther away from home you get the less postage costs you, it seems; but I suppose I had best wait before congratulating myself on this until I find out what the American Postal arrangements are on this side. It is an interesting fact, though, that England has not yet found it necessary to increase postal rates while the U. S. did so almost immediately on entering the war.

You will be surprised, no doubt, at receiving two letters from me dated so closely together, but while I am at this rest camp I am making use of what may prove to be the last comfortable writing facilities I shall enjoy for some time. In fact, there is nothing to do but write and loaf, for we are not allowed to leave the military reservation. And while it is hard on us to keep us from sightseeing it is a good thing to make us make use of this place as a real rest camp, for the whole outfit is travel weary and has more wearying travel ahead of it. I regret very much that I cannot see anything of this vicinity. There is some compensation for staying, however, in the fact that the mess has improved greatly, is in fact much less stinted than the officers' mess I shared in England. This tends to confirm me in the view that there is a lot of



hysterical economy in England. I was inclined to believe so when I observed that while the amount of money you could spend for food seemed to be pretty strictly regulated there was nothing to keep you from squandering as much as you pleased on champagne during the legal hours for selling liquors. False economy is in some respects as bad as no economy, so I was sorry to note this English tendency.

In the matter of dress I am inclined to think that the English women set the American women a very good example. I saw very little extravagant befrilling, although I would probably have found plenty in London had I gotten there. The English women I saw wore simple dresses, low cut, low heel, sensible looking shoes and heavy stockings of the golf wool variety. I am inclined to agree that the English women show better sense in their dress than do their American sisters. While in England I saw only one woman exhibiting the very obvious silk stocking which has come to be almost the rule in our country.

I have been censoring more mail for the men and one of them remarked very brightly that the only talk he can understand over here is the dogs', which is just the same. I might add that so is the cats'. We have two cats here, a white and gray kitten that lounges all over the officers in the club, and a gray tiger that puts up in the men's quarters and is very French in that he talks all over himself whenever you give him the opportunity.

I know it will interest you to hear of the experience of one of our men who speaks German. He spoke to a German prisoner and was informed by the Boche in the course of their conversation that the Allies could never lick Germany, that she still has plenty of men. When the American asked the German how long he had been a prisoner the answer was, "Twenty-nine months." And



there you are! The fixed idea that Germany will win has been so beaten into the German skull that about the only way to let any light into that skull is to break it. Here was this fellow, who had been out of Germany almost throughout the war, serene in his conviction that everything *must* be all right in the Fatherland.

December 15:—Well, this missive is being concluded somewhere else in France, and maybe my next may be begun still somewhere else, for I am by no means sure that we have yet reached our final abiding place for the training period. For several reasons I would like to stay here, though. Not only is this locality most interesting, but the sooner we get set and stay that way, the sooner we will get letters from home. As long as we keep shuttling here and there we cannot hope to get any mail, and that is the hardest part of foreign service. Officers whom we met here to-day told us that they did not get their first mail for six or or seven weeks *after arriving* on this side. I trust we shall have better luck. However, if we are kept going at the same pace we set right off the bat to-day—and I hope we are—we will have mighty little time to worry about anything.

More than ever I am convinced that the soldiers of the Allies are doing the greatest work that has ever been done. And I am surer than ever, if that be possible, that if I had not undertaken to do what I could in that work I would never have been satisfied with myself. The closer I get to the firing line the more enthusiastic I am over the job.

In spite of my apprehension that our last quarters would be the last really comfortable ones we would have, we are now fixed up just about as well as soldiers on active service could ask to be, and in a most interesting place about which I will try to write you a little something as soon as I get time. In haste and love, QUINCY.



The location from which the latter part of the above letter was written and which is elaborately described in the next was Fort de Peigney, an old stronghold situated about two kilometers, or a mile and a quarter, from the ancient walled city of Langres, which is situated, roughly, a hundred and fifty miles east by south from Paris. The trip was made in bitter cold weather in unheated coaches. The men were not loaded on cattle cars as were the French soldiers, but third class carriages were provided. The space on these was painfully inadequate and the windows were broken. All had to stand, jammed like sardines while the cruel wind swept through. Some of the men were so frozen that they could hardly walk when they reached Langres.

It should be explained here that after leaving the American shores all distinction between the old regimental officers and the "extras" from Plattsburg and other camps had been effaced. Mills was placed regularly in charge of a squad of 50 men of Company G. Down to the date now reached Major Stanley expected to join the rest of the regiment at once. The other battalions were sent, however, to the Haute Marne region near Chaumont and were quartered in the little village of Rimaucourt. The only Americans in the Langres vicinity besides the Second Battalion were officers from scattered regiments on detached duty. Company G was the only one quartered in the Fort, the rest of the battalion being housed in the Turenne barracks. Mills promptly followed up the announcement of his arrival:

December 17, 1917.

DEAR MOTHER: Well, well! And where do you suppose I spent Christmas? For this will reach you long after the 25th. No, not in gay Paree— not by any means, but in an old stone fort somewhere between the Pyrenees



and the Vosges which might have been translated right out of the pages of Dumas for our entertainment. Here is where we were stationed on finishing our rail journey, and here we are likely to stay for part of our training at least. And it is surely a strange experience to these Iowa boys to be set down in a spot so vastly different from their native State to walk guard on narrow drawbridges and lofty parapets. There is no grilled portcullis to be lowered at night for them to peep through, but there are moats in plenty, deep and wide though dry, and numberless subterranean passageways through works of earth and stone.

We officers mess in a long, low vaulted, stone chamber illumined by old brass lamps, the property of former French garrisons for decades. We eat from trestled tables, sitting on trestled benches, and while our tableware is mostly modern our coffee is poured from great stone pitchers that might have been in use, for all their appearance, since before coffee was known as a beverage in this part of the world. Our sleeping quarters are in another vaulted stone chamber, higher of ceiling and on an upper floor, with a great circular well—which once ran all the way from roof to cellar but is now floored over with wood at each story—piercing its centre. All floors, in courtyards or inner chambers, are of stone, and your steps resound mightily in the narrow interior passage ways.

You are not surprised to know, I am sure, that it is hard for me to convince myself every morning that I ought not to be clamping on a steel casque and girding myself with a broadsword belt instead of putting on a Stetson service hat and strapping on a Colt .45. Really, it would not surprise me at all for some knight or retainer in coat of mail to step out of the black recess of an underground chamber into the flare of my ultra-modern electric flashlight and challenge me at any time as I go straying about the deserted quar-



ters of the place. Mysterious passageways lead down from dark chambers on the wall tops through iron gratings and blackness into the bowels of the fort. Just why I haven't seen the official ghost emerge stealthily from one of them I do not know, but I haven't given up hope yet.

I think the men are awestruck somewhat by an environment so different from anything they had previously known. They are as interested as children and every bit as busy exploring when they are not at work. They have had their hands full cleaning up, though, for we found the place very dirty and had to dig in for all we were worth to make it habitable. The commanding officer—an American—was amazed by the manner our outfit pitched right in as soon as it piled off the train. "I never saw anything like it," he said. "Here you arrive at the end of a trip from the U. S., and after spending the last two nights on crowded railroad cars with practically no rest go right to work without a word of grumbling from a single man. And what breakfast you got to work on you had to scrape together the best you could." His praise was deserved, too, for the outfit certainly did come through the entrance into foreign service in a soldierly manner. The only great drawback to our location here is the shortage of fuel, and we would have met the same trouble anywhere in France, I guess. We have to scratch to get enough wood to keep the kitchens going, and as for the living quarters, well we bundle up and make the best of it. Fortunately all my stuff came through with me, so I am warmly clothed. The blanket of snow two or three inches deep which covers the ground to-day indicates that we will have to keep on bundling up for winter has begun.

This fort, which is very interesting historically, overlooks one of those typical French valleys, pictures of which you have seen so often, with a tree-lined canal winding



through it, and rolling waves of cultivated fields, dotted with villages here and there, stretching away on every hand. Trees are few. On the summit of another hill some three miles away stands an ancient French walled town [Langres], one of the oldest, in which I have no doubt that I shall find much to interest me in spite of the fact that Mr. Rubel came back from visiting it yesterday much disgusted because it had no subways or Gay White Way. As you know, a landscape is always at its finest under a snow blanket, and I walked all around the top of the fort the first thing in the morning so I would not miss an inch of it. I see copies of the Paris editions of the *New York Herald* and *Chicago Tribune*, so I know that you folks in New York are plowing through a foot of snow. Your winter is beginning early.

As to the coffee I told you to mail me, don't bother; we have plenty of good coffee—good food of every sort, in fact—now that we are back on American rations. The only trouble is in getting fuel to cook the food, and you can't send me a cord of wood or a ton of coal by either express or parcels post.

By the way, have a ride on me. Here is a subway ticket I found in my clothes, and as there is no likelihood of my needing it right away I pass it along to you.

Here it is 11:10 o'clock, which means that you folks at home are just starting the day, and also that I will be rolled in my blankets some hours before you and the cats turn in to-night. Somehow I have never been able to catch up that five hours we lost somewhere in the Atlantic. You know I have a weakness for sleep anyway.

I hope that this finds you and Dad as well as I am, and also as free from worry. We are due to begin right away on a hard course of training, and all the men will be glad. They have been inactive so long that they are getting stiff. I will write as often as I can, but the conditions are



not propitious. Everybody crowds around one fire—if we are lucky enough to have even one—and everybody but myself talks. Much love.

QUINCY.

It will be borne in mind that all these letters have the conventional date line "Somewhere in France!" The next following, however, were written from the Fort de Peigney. The old town visited was, of course, Langres:

December 20, 1917.

MY DEAR MOTHER: You cannot imagine my delight to-day at receiving my first mail since leaving the other side, including two of the letters you mailed during my first voyage. I cannot expect to receive for a long time any of your recent letters. But it will seem more like Christmas now that I have heard from home.

The weather has moderated considerably, but the ground is still white and I am expecting a white Christmas, which will also be strictly in keeping with the spirit.

As I sit here writing, the afternoon sunlight is pouring in through our long, narrow window, flooding the narrow, vaulted chamber with that ruddy golden glow that you see so often in the winter time. Altogether, circumstances seem to be doing their best to repay me for the way they smote me last night. I started out from town after dark, and in a network of roads naturally took the wrong one, with the consequence that I wandered for several hours over the beautiful snow-covered landscape I wrote you about previously. Take my word for it, my little old pocket flashlight was a friend in need. One of the enlisted men who lost his way was not blessed with a flashlight, and in consequence he didn't get home until morning. He was lucky in finding a place to stay for the night, for the long distances you can traverse over these roads,



with every foot of land on either hand under cultivation and yet not a sign of human habitation, are remarkable. Where you see isolated farmhouses in the United States the country folk here cluster their homes in little villages.

The old town I visited is altogether the quaintest place I have ever been in. Not a house within its walls but appears to have been there since the Seventeenth Century. Its crooked little thread-needle streets wind every way around the terraces, and the tones that echo from its belfries sound strangely mediæval and out of tune with the jangling of the railway engine bells and the shrill squealing of their whistles in the yards in the valley below. I felt very much that I was walking in the Middle Ages, but every time a pretty French mademoiselle clad in the latest Paris modes turned a corner I was jarred rudely out of my reverie. Yes, in spite of the war there is no dearth of well-dressed women. And some of them are very pretty, too, although there is really very little comfort in making signs to them. I am free to state that the smile language is universal, however.

I had no trouble in purchasing at the inns, which are as antiquated as the town itself, all the food I wanted, and exceedingly good food it was, too, well cooked and of fine flavor. The only dearth really notable is of sweets. For dessert you get fruits, but little pastry. Chocolate candies are scarce and very high in price. But no one should kick on our fare. The bread—whole wheat—is fine, much better than any of the same sort I have ever got hold of in the States. I hope that you are as well as when your letters were written, and Dad also. My love to both of you.

QUINCY.

December 22, 1917.

MY DEAR MOTHER: Here it is only three days until Christmas, and I can scarcely realize that we have been



here a week. We are kept so busy that actually all the time I have to myself is devoted to writing letters.

I have been waiting to say something about the country until I could get a better idea of it, but I have had no opportunity to do more observing than I can manage from the fort's walls. Certainly the phrase "the pleasant land of France" would describe this section in a milder season, for there is a peacefulness about the whole landscape that simply puts you at rest. In winter dress the landscape is the most beautiful I have ever seen. First it received a coating of two or three inches of snow; then we had a succession of peculiarly gray days when the air was so heavy with mist that Lieut. Nelson lost his way walking out from town in broad daylight, and from this mist every stone and twig gathered a feathery white coating that gave the whole countryside the appearance of an immense frosted cake, like the fancy ones you see in the caterers' windows, when the sun shone out dimly on it this morning.

I may say that the sun has not really shone since we have been in France, but the half lights from it produce some marvelous effects. The one of yesterday afternoon I do not expect to see outdone ever. Looking across toward the town perched on the opposite hilltop we saw its battlements and towers standing out vaguely through a purple haze of the sort that we used to comment on so often at the Academy picture shows, except that this coloring, painted by the hand of Nature, excelled in exquisite delicacy anything that could be produced by the hand of man. City and hill seemed some fairy mirage, right side up, enticing to an enchanted land. And the utter stillness which grips the entire country accentuated this illusion of unreality.

This quietness is the most striking thing about France. Each person is going about his business as unconcernedly as if there were no war anywhere in the world. If it were



not for the numbers of men in uniform you see everywhere you would think the country was at peace. There is none of the excitement and lack of control which we have been taught to expect of the Gallic temperament. Instead, the keynote of the French character seems to me to be stoicism. Nor is the country grief stricken because of its tremendous losses, so far as I can tell. Its people seem to be animated by the ideal: "For France!" It is inspiring to see this spirit.

I have been particularly struck by the fine physique of all of the French soldiers I have seen. Those we have come in contact with average larger in stature than the men of our organization. And when you look at the size of their leg and arm muscles, the breadth of their shoulders and the depth of their chests you understand why the Kaiser's "supermen" have been brought right down to earth. These Frenchmen are finer-looking specimens of humanity than the English soldiers, and they are a gay bunch. While women are doing a great deal of the work here they are by no means doing it all. It is nothing unusual to see young men at civilian occupations. Generally speaking, I believe the country looks to be better worked, in respect to farming activities, than England. In common with the great preponderance of the men—whose letters I censor—I like it the better of the two countries. Both must be vastly different in peace times, however. One thing that has impressed me greatly is that in neither country do you see, with rare exceptions, automobiles or other vehicles on the roads except those in the military service. This is the outstanding indication which points always to the fact that the country is at war.

So far as I can see no one here is suffering for want of necessary food, although the luxuries come pretty high. Butchers' and grocery shops seem well stocked and patronized, and no one looks pinched for want of a full stomach.



As for ourselves, we are faring royally. For one thing, we have biscuits—and good ones, too—at almost every meal. This is the first time I've enjoyed this Southern luxury since I left home to go to New York. And the butter we melt on them is "the best butter" and the syrup we "sop" them in is the best syrup—officially known in army circles as "larrup"—that is to be obtained. No one need sympathize with us on the food question, that's sure.

With much love to Dad and yourself, QUINCY.

P.S. I might mention here that I have made an allotment from my pay to be sent to you every month, beginning with December. You will receive the first installment some time in January, or, if you do not, communicate with the War Department and find out what the hitch is. I want you to use this money in theatre-going and enjoying life. I do not need it; in fact there is no opportunity to spend over here, and I have no doubt that I will be sending additional sums home from time to time. Do not save this money, for I think it will be much better invested in whatever will occupy your mind and keep you from worrying—in which there is no use—and this applies to Dad as well as yourself.

With much love to both of you, QUINCY.

December 25, 1917.

DEAR MOTHER AND DAD: Of all the lands I've been in—not that they've been so many at that—or shall be in ever, I am sure that this is the real Christmas land. The whole country, as I see it to-day from the walls of the fort here, lies before me like a great Christmas card. It is the original of all the little snow scenes with which all the cards you have ever bought for this season have been decorated. The windows of the town on the hill opposite sparkle in the half-sunlight like the tinsel decorations on the cards that



you have sent and received to-day. With its walled exterior and its snow-covered roofs, you feel that this is not a real town but just a Christmas town put there to cheer us with the Christmas spirit.

And, while I have seen no holly over here, France is surely the country for mistletoe. Trees are few, but the proportion of those decorated with huge clusters of this romantic parasite is simply amazing. Never have I seen mistletoe of such luxuriant growth anywhere else, but I have not had any view close enough to see whether it is as prolific in berries as our smaller American variety. Perhaps there is some relation between the profusion of French mistletoe and the reputed warmth of the feminine temperament here, but if so I am still waiting for the demonstrations of said temperament. Most of the girls I have seen have been pretty much the same as American girls in all respects. They are far prettier than the English girls—which is some compensation for having to stay here.

I have devoted a large part of the day to censoring mail. The men are writing barrels of it, and while reading it is really a laborious task for us officers we do not feel like limiting them because their letter writing is such an obvious outlet for their loneliness. When they begin to hear from home regularly they will write less themselves. But they are now much more isolated than are their homefolk, who surely must have received some of the messages we sent back en route. This thing of being cut off from communication with those we left behind is, and will always be even when we go into action, the feature of warfare that preys most on our minds. The men write cheerfully enough about themselves—and they are experiencing nothing that soldiers should complain of—but when it comes to the mail subject they get importunate and beg everybody they know to write to them. Which explains the great volume of letters going out now,



While the job of censoring involves a lot of work I find much to interest me in it, too. You have to smile at the fashion in which these men speak well enough of France until they commence comparing it with the U. S. and then, as one put it, they "wouldn't swap the State of Iowa for all the land on this side of the Atlantic." To another's way of thinking, "the sun never shines on any land but the good old U. S. A," this comment being prompted by the prevailing fogs we have encountered in England and France. One chap who hasn't heard from his girl yet has threatened "to eat fish hooks and die" if she doesn't take her pen in hand and express tender sentiments toward him. "I can't tell you where I am because I don't know," wrote another; "ain't it a helluva note when a fellow don't know where he's at?" "I'm not worrying about getting back to the old U. S. A," declared one more, "but I wish to God I could walk, instead of ride on that damned boat." Ocean travel is not very popular with the 168th. "I haven't seen a girl with silk stockings on since leaving the States. America for mine!" confesses one. This would seem to indicate that the theory upon which the American young woman dresses may not be entirely erroneous. "I didn't hang up my stocking," writes a wag, "for fear Old Santa would leave me a steel helmet and a new pick and shovel."

The men are cheerful, admirably so, joking over discomforts at which not one of them but would have rebelled in civilian life. So far as discomforts can be minimized, they are, of course, and I am surprised that conditions are so good considering that we are living in the field in actual time of war. But just the same the men would rather by all sorts of odds be back in old I-o-way, and they write in unison that they sure do want to get at those Boches and give them hell for bringing good Americans out of God's country on such a jaunt as this. As



they put it they're, "just raring to get at Fritz." That's the sort of "peace on earth, good will to men" spirit that pervades this ancient pile to-day. The men didn't really hate the Germans before they came over here; they do now. Remarkable what a fine boomerang the Kaiser constructed for himself in Frightfulness. The process of "beaning" himself with said weapon may be slow, but it will prove sure.

I did not attend church this morning, but I celebrated the day even more formally; I made it a real feast day by taking a bath, the first I've had since arriving in France. To get it I had to have my striker bring in two big fifteen gallon galvanized iron buckets, each half full of hot water, in one of which I stood, washing out of the other. If I walk to town I can get a bath at the hospital—and a dated certificate to prove that once I was really clean—but I haven't had much relish for walking that town road after the way I stumbled all over the map of France the night I lost my way. Anyway, I'm clean now; but baths come around just about as often as Christmasses in this country.

Well, God bless you folks at home—and the loving ones at Statesville!

Just as I was about to write this morning that Santa could have brought no load so welcome, had he come to Fort [de Peigney], as a bunch of mail sacks, the mail call blew, and you should have heard the yell of delight that rang out of the barracks. A mob of wild men in uniform followed it out into the courtyard, ran right on over the bugler and would have torn the mailbags to pieces if a guard hadn't been put over them. Christmas mail! Real Christmas mail! And it brought me your (Mother's) letter mailed November 25, yours and Dad's letters of November 29, Sweet's Christmas card (a real cute one it is, too) postmarked December 4, a letter from M.L. and *The Evening Sun* editorial pages for the



week I left home. What a fine Christmas present from all of you. I am so glad to know that you received in advance the reassurance I hoped you would get regarding my safe departure and voyage. And I am so thankful to know that both you and Dad—I can't get out of the habit of writing in the singular instead of the plural—are both so well and sensible. Don't worry, ever; it is uncalled for and useless. I'm sorry you, Mother, went down to the ferry the day I left. I delivered your good wishes to the gentlemen you named; Uncle Sam presented Mr. Nelson with a Christmas present in the shape of a 1st Lieutenancy, by the way, and all asked to be remembered to both of you.

I never expect to be more fully exhausted than I was that sailing day. But my stateroom on the boat was a luxury, and I recuperated speedily after some hours of continuous sleep. Am getting lots of sleep here, and am just as tough physically and as mean as anybody needs to be to go Fritz-hunting. No, "my friend" the dog didn't come along. Suppose he's still hanging around Governor's Island.

Taking it by and large, with censoring letters, bathing up, target practice and instructing the men, this has been a pretty active Christmas, with Turkey and "fixins" for dinner and a smoker, the fuel furnished by *The Sun* tobacco fund, to finish the day. The men got ten packages of tobacco and several packs of cigarettes apiece; it was a real boon to them. I had the pleasure of formally presenting the smokes in behalf of *The Sun's* readers. Much love.

QUINCY.

———, FRANCE,

December 29, 1917.

DEAR MOTHER: We are resting up a bit to-day after considerable of a manœuvre yesterday, and the rest is not



amiss for I'll assure you that clambering around over rough ground through about a foot of snow isn't the easiest thing in the world, particularly when you're packing loads of weapons and ammunition up and down steep hills. One good thing: I'm certainly warm enough with all the sweaters and helmets and mittens you provided for me. My feet are warm too, for I keep them in heavy boots two sizes too large for me—all the extra space being occupied by two pairs of those extra heavy woolen socks—which lace nearly to my knees, their uppers taking the place of leggings. That sheepskin coat is the most valuable thing I purchased. I wear it all the time except when I sleep, and it keeps me as warm as toast. And when I shuck it off and crawl into Bill Gramer's sleeping bag every night I find the temperature equally comfortable. I am most fortunate in being so thoroughly equipped; in fact I do not know any other officer who is as well fitted out as I am.

The cold here is steadier than the New York brand, and I believe that the thermometer average is much lower, but it is a dry cold that you do not notice. There is none of the rawness that strikes you to the marrow in the wind-swept canyons of Manhattan. Being on the weather subject I will dilate some more at this point on the beauties of this country. The weather is the most remarkable I have ever encountered in respect to the fact that, while the days are almost uniformly gray with the sun breaking through only rarely, the nights are almost always clear, with the brightest moonlight I have ever seen and the stars shining like jewels. In the white moonlight the snow sparkles like diamond chips on ground, trees and buildings, and walking at night is a delight to the eye. In spite of my experience in getting lost on the town road that dark night I have been rambling around alone over the countryside at night just because the moonlight is too wonderful to go inside and leave it to go to waste.



Speaking of yesterday's work, we are busy learning to use automatic rifles, grenades and other weapons. I have very little trouble in familiarizing myself with these and am becoming a pretty keen shot with the automatic pistol. I just imagine I see a helmet spike atop of the can I am aiming at—and it's good-night can! After yesterday's problem I can understand why neither side attempts—as a rule—any extensive operations in winter. A man, laden down as he has to be in going over the top, is handicapped by the slippery footing and his progress is likely to be so slow that the other fellow in the trench will beat him to the solution of the problem. My wonder increases that the Russian troops were able to make the progress they did in the snowbound Caucasus. They must have been operating against troops vastly inferior in both morale and equipment.

Speaking of the amount of stuff a fighting man has to carry, I felt as chock full of death and destruction when I went forward yesterday as the tarantula and the rat each bragged about being in their famous battle, as narrated by Archie the Cockroach, per old Don Marquis. I finished my Christmas letter early in the day in order to get it into the mail, and so couldn't narrate all the circumstances of the evening, the main feature of which was a concert by a band organized by a number of men from the company, with instruments they brought from the States. I assure you they rendered fearful and wonderful music, but we had a real jollification, and there is another scheduled for New Year's. I have intended to comment also on the fact that although the interior walls of this fortification are of stone we have some snoring experts who can bore right through them—and I am one of the heaviest calibered of the bunch.

You asked me what sort of present I bought myself with your Xmas donation. I haven't spent it yet—in fact



I spend hardly any money at all now—but you may rest assured that I will invest it when I get to Paris. Or maybe I'll let you buy me another pair of heavy boots with it before then. While I think of it, I want you to be sure to let me know whether you have to pay any postage on my letters and whether they are ever censored. As we understand it, letters addressed as mine are now will be delivered free of postage. And, so far as we know, we do all the censoring that is done on them. I am particularly anxious to know whether the letters I sent you from England were censored. I have a presentiment that the one I wrote on the boat did not get past the British censor *in toto*, although there was nothing in it that should not have passed.

I haven't told you before about our cat, which lives in the recesses of the fort and has a short tail just like Sweet. It is a very fat and very indifferent feline. It has come to me several times after some wheedling but does not seem to care for attention. So far as I have been able to observe, it does not depend on the kitchen for a bite, being a true huntsman cat and preferring to live on game, of which there is certainly plenty around. It is a white cat with gray spots, its color scheme being such as to provide it with natural camouflage which assists it in hunting.

And I must not neglect to state that that fruit cake of ——'s certainly was a Christmas blessing. I kept it carefully in my trunk until the day arrived and then cut it. Half of it was devoured on Christmas day and the other half is being held for New Year's Day. It kept fine, being neither too wet nor too dry, just right in fact. Our mess continues good, so good that I feel no desire to go to town for meals. Have been in but once yet, and hardly think it likely that my average will be more than one visit in two weeks while in training. Not that I can't go pretty much whenever I want to, but there is so much to learn that I



don't feel justified in loafing. Am in the best of health and spirits and want to hear a report that you are both the same. With lots of love for Dad and yourself,

QUINCY.

January 1, 1918.

MY DEAR PARENTS: You see, I am beginning the New Year right by writing to you. I must also pen a letter to-day without fail to old Bill Gramer thanking him for the tobacco he donated to the company for Christmas. Because *The Sun's* tobacco fund donation was so large, I held the Gramer bunch for a New Year's eve smoker, and last night we combined it with several other packages sent by Iowa people and had another big time. The combined gifts made an allowance of three cigars, several packages of Bull Durham, Tuxedo, etc., and cigarettes per man. As the men have not yet received their November and December pay they are clean strapped, and if it were not for these gifts they would be just about starving for the soldier's one indispensable luxury, tobacco. Their friends did them even a kinder turn than they knew in sending them these presents.

More snow and hoar frost, so a little more "mirating," to use Manlius Watts's great word, over the beauties of this country is in order. On the skyline all around us are rows of those Lombardy poplars which are so beautiful anywhere, but which are more pleasing to the eye here than elsewhere because they appear natural details of the landscape. You have no idea what a striking sight they make standing out, their bare branches coated white with snow and frost, against the dull gray of the sky. With the sunshine to accentuate their whiteness and to intensify the leaden hue of their cloud-curtain background, these trees seem like great growths of coral rising right out of the ground.



The thicker the snow coverlet, the more beautiful this old fort becomes. As it stood before the snow fell it reminded you of the fortifications pictured in the movies; now, if you did not know of the masses of earth and stone underneath the snow covering you would expect to see the whole structure melt away with the warming up of the sun in the spring. No melting would be anticipated at any early date, however, for as one of the men put it in a letter home: "Sunny France—sunny hell!"

The deeper the snow gets the more I congratulate myself over my sheepskin coat and my great heavy, waterproof boots, although the latter do make me go "galumphing" around as if I weighed as much as an elephant. To hear me walking down one of these narrow corridors you would think I was a whole police force on the march, the stone walls and ceilings re-echo the sound so. By the way, before I forget it, I have been eating at the same table with four other North Carolinian reserve officers, one of whom, Sykes by name, is from Charlotte. These are some of the men who were sent over immediately at the close of the first training camps for further study here. I wish now that I had been sent over with them. These men have been moving about from school to school with the result that their mail has been just about one jump behind them all the time, so that they have been almost entirely out of communication with their homes. The man who sits at the place next to mine tells me he has received just three letters since arriving in October, and mail is a sore subject with him. In this respect, at any rate, I am luckier than he. And—another "by the way"—you remember our favorite Col. Heeza Liar of the animated movie cartoons, don't you? Well, just bear him in mind and I'll tell you something very interesting about him.

"I see by the papers" that while we are engrossed in the more intimate personal details of history making over here



there is some history making in the large going on back in America, viz: the taking over of the railroads by the Government. I sincerely trust that this step has not been rendered necessary by the disloyalty of organized labor. Government ownership or management would spike any strike plot, of course, by making the strikers guilty of treason. I wish that you would keep me posted on political conditions at home, not only in regard to international and national aspects but also in regard to the way Hylan starts out at City Hall.

The men are very wisely sending their "Happy Easter!" greetings to their folks now, so I will take a tip from them and send mine to you and all my friends and "folks," especially the home people at Statesville. With much love for all including the feline department,

QUINCY.

January 6, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: The company typewriter isn't working, so here goes to see whether I've forgotten entirely how to tickle the keys. No doubt I'll find my fingers less nimble, for when the hand gains in cunning in one direction it must of necessity lose a bit in the other.

I can't conscientiously say that this is drawing to "the end of a perfect day," for two separate and distinct motor trucks have come charging across the drawbridge loaded up with mail—and all that I received was *The Evening Sun* editorial page clippings for the first week after our initial start across the pond back in October. They are welcome, but I haven't had a letter since Christmas Day, and what I want is REAL MAIL.

We were spoiled by having our first batch of letters delivered to us so promptly, and now that we are running up against the same sort of luck that beset everybody who preceded us, we're taking it pretty hard. The consign-



ment of mail that arrived to-day consisted almost entirely of Christmas packages bearing postmarks, some of them, as far back as October. About the only comfort they brought me was the encouragement to hope that the McElwees' Christmas box may yet reach me. I am endeavoring to be as amiable as possible under the circumstances, but my disposition does smack at times of the "British-colonel-after-twenty-years'-service-in-India" sort Pollock used to accuse me of at Plattsburg.

While there have been several reasons—of a military nature which I cannot explain—for some mix-up in our mail service, I do not see that there is any excuse for its remaining paralyzed so long. From men who went through this sort of thing last summer, and are at last hearing from home pretty regularly, I learn that while the mail in this direction may be interrupted there is seldom any interruption in the stream of letters which you send back the other way. I am relieved to feel reasonably certain that my letters are reaching you O.K., for while I know I'm all right, you don't. Mail is a pretty bad thing to lack, but I thank God there has been no trouble yet with the delivery of food. Our rations are certainly all that could be desired, we have good dry shelter for officers and men, and the sick list is nothing like as large as might have been anticipated, considering all the circumstances.

Latterly we have been having more wood, and have been keeping warmer. And the problem of light has been solved by the introduction of a gasoline burning lamp which generates its own gas from the liquid, and then burns that gas in a mantle. The light is very clear and white, and is produced at a minimum of cost. Nor is there any danger connected with it. The stoves are somewhat like the first sheet iron one you saw in my tent at Governor's Island, but better. At that, they're not so much better, for we have nicknamed them "one-man stoves." The



name is easily explained. What with the green wood we have to burn in them it takes about all one man's time to keep one going. If you're right on the job after getting a nice bed of coals formed, you're all right, but if you're just a minute late about replenishing the fuel you're "out of luck," as they say in the army. However, if I am as comfortably provided for all the time I'm in the service I'll be more than lucky—even if I do have to stop here and doctor the fire in that gosh-hanged sheet iron mule. That's better, so I can go on with my letter writing without fear of freezing.

I got as much fun out of buying a pair of shoes yesterday as you would at a comic opera. The shopkeeper, his wife and his daughter all took turns at trying to effect the deal, and then they joined forces and tried all together, all talking, gesticulating and smiling at once. When I finally signified that I would take the shoes all three nearly collapsed from exhaustion. The father produced an expansive handkerchief and mopped his face, the mother flopped into a chair and fanned herself energetically; the daughter was the only one of the three who had strength left to do up the package.

I might state that these are *SOME* shoes, being built of rawhide, and having soles nearly half an inch thick upon which are affixed numerous spikes, which we know as hob-nails but which the French call, much more appropriately, "talons." I have had these shoes oiled so that they are as waterproof as my boots, and I am now ready for the trenches, so far as footgear goes. There remains much other preparing to be done, of course, which will take a great deal of time if the programme is carried out as laid down, and as it should be.

But this is aside from the point that my new shoes cost me \$12, and I'd have paid several times that price rather than go without them. If you've got good heavy water-



tight shoes, big enough to permit you to wear three pair of heavy wool socks, you're not going to be bothered by either cold feet or sickness.

I can get along over here without the new gold shoulder bars that have been authorized for second lieutenants, but I couldn't get along without the heavy footgear, heavy clothes and heavy bedding. The idea of decorating the lieutenants, first or second, with gold bars for the lower rank and silver bars for the higher is not a bad one so long as said lieutenant is to be paraded, for the uniform of the American officer has been found too severely plain for practical purposes. The gilt bar is similar to the silver bar which has long been worn by the first lieutenants. Gold for the lower rank and silver for the higher may seem a trifle out of keeping, but it is according to army precedent. The major wears a gold leaf, the lieutenant-colonel a silver one. Some of these days when I go on leave, I may have occasion to wear the new insignia, but none are available over here now, and the only second lieutenants who are wearing them are the new arrivals who have left the States since the new order was issued.

I suppose that by the time you receive this you will have the flock of New Year cards I mailed you. I inclose two more cards with the request that you complete addresses, add stamps and forward them to their destinations. I know you would have been interested, shopping with me when I purchased these cards. The shop people had a regular menagerie consisting of two large, sleepy-eyed cats of the general color scheme of Cinnamon, and a rather antiquated rat terrier. If you wanted to start something all you had to do was pet the cats while the dog was looking, and he straightway sent up a wail to heaven. He was so jealous of those cats that if I made a move toward them he got in my road. It was quite a comical little show. And, besides, the girl who sold me the post-



cards was "real pretty," so the time I spent there was by no means wasted.

I have finally made very good friends with the short-tailed cat here at the fort, but it does not care for too much familiarity, never allowing itself to be taken up off the ground, and never desiring to come into my quarters. It believes in giving soldiers generally a pretty wide berth, but less because of having been maltreated than because it comes of wild stock, I think.

We hear that there are ninety carloads of mail somewhere in France waiting for delivery to American soldiers somewhere else in France, so it is reasonable to suppose that I have some letters waiting around to be delivered.

I stopped at this point to do a little job of censoring and I'm here to tell you that all the men are interested in those ninety carloads. Unless there is a real letter delivery soon I expect to see some of the fellows try to swim back to dear old I-o-way.

I had another illustration of the smallness of the world yesterday when a Dr. Willard, a 1st lieut. in the medical corps, blew in to look at the men's feet. He is from Philadelphia, and knows T. Grier Miller. Dr. Willard had his own fun with the men, who invariably insist on wearing their civilian sizes for military service, and take it as a personal affront for anyone to suggest more room for their tootsies. He went away leaving an outraged bunch who had been ordered to increase their shoe numbers on an average two sizes per man. This enlarging of the shoe gives each man a chance to wear several pairs of socks as I do. If a soldier is shod in this way he will not have "trench feet."

Well, this missive continues to ramble on, and I guess I had better cut it off right here before I wear the typewriter out. By the time I write you again I hope that I will be able to report the arrival of more mail. Anyway, don't



get discouraged. Keep on writing. Maybe I will get a whole sackful all of my own some of these fine days.

With much love to Dad and yourself, QUINCY.

January 9, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Here are some fine cards which are also faithful representations of the sort of men we see in the French uniform. The more I see of them the surer I am that all this "bled white" stuff about France is being circulated by German agents.

I am too busy to write a mid-week letter this week, and am sending these cards instead. And it may be that I will continue too busy to write twice a week; for Captain Steller and Lieutenants Younkin, Rubel, Nelson and Pearsall have been detached temporarily and sent away to training school, leaving Mr. Millikin and myself to run the company. Later we will go to school, and in the meantime we certainly have our hands full.

I have supervision of sanitation and of a mess for some 30 officers, so you can realize that there is very little surplus time to hang heavy on my hands. All that is not demanded by routine duties is being devoted to receiving instruction. I have learned a lot that I am sure will stand me in good stead later. The training we are getting is very interesting; the only fault I have to find is that I couldn't possibly get enough of it. That's always the way with the things worth while, no matter what your vocation.

The weather continues cold, with lots of snow, but the winter is far more endurable than in New York. I note that you have been going through a bitter spell, and hope that it did not mean any hardship for you because of coal shortage. I continue well. Had a slight cold because I didn't get my boots and heavy shoes in time, but it is gone now, and I am in the pink of condition.

No mail from you yet since Christmas, but I know it's



not your fault. Love to Dad and yourself and regards to my friends. Q.

January 13, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: I have been more interested the last day or so in the news from back home, as printed in the Paris editions of the N. Y. *Herald* and Chicago *Tribune*, than at any time since landing in France. President Wilson has, it seems to me, made one of his best strokes of diplomacy in his latest address to Congress setting forth the ends America is fighting for. In so far as the Russian people may be considered as having a point of view, the President's speech is the thing to hit it exactly right at exactly the right time.

Developments in the Russo-German "peace" negotiations appear to indicate that the Huns are having to deal with at least a nucleus of loyal Russians who are not to be domineered by the German-bought traitors among the Bolsheviki, and who are fully aware that the proceedings thus far might be much better termed "German annexation negotiations."

A band of sincere, idealistic dreamers roused to war by German chicanery, as it has been practised upon them already, might well turn out to be the most dangerous foe Kultur has yet stirred up for itself. As I have written to you before, I have never joined those pessimists who have given Russia up as entirely lost. There are some who still hope to see the guillotine set up on the Nevsky Prospect, and if it is set up its blade might just as well fall directly upon the neck of the Hohenzollern dynasty, for the blows that it strikes will ultimately reach that far. The situation in Russia has not yet reached its final phase. No man can tell what that final phase will be. Not until the great Russian people have been crushed down to the very ground under the weight of Prussianism will I believe that



they are entirely lost to the rest of the world, that the forces of reaction are to be enrooted in the ruins of the Romanoff throne instead of those of progress.

We are very much buried here in our little theatre of action in France. We haven't much time to think; we are too intent on learning how to combat the immediate physical strength of Kultur to pay much attention to the bigger underlying spiritual forces which move much more slowly than von Hindenburg's drive, but which will, after all, have much more to do with shaping history as it will be written. Nevertheless, we do think, and only in the fact that the men who do the work in the trenches can think lies the hope for the future. If the German soldiers could think, if they had not been carefully taught not to think, then the problem would be easy of solution, would solve itself. Since the German man-machine is devoid of reason there seems to be but one answer—to annihilate as many of him as possible. Hence it is that the one idea of the Allied soldiers as they start into a new year of war is, "Kill the Boche!"

If you can kill enough of him he begins to be overawed by physical terror, the only means by which you can make any appeal to him. And the French, English and American men higher up in military matters all assure you with a certainty that bears every appearance of being founded on fact, that the Allies are killing four or more Germans for every man they lose.

One thing I cannot understand, unless the explanation may be that German high command does not want to pay such a price, with its men handicapped by the snow and ice underfoot, is why the big German drive on the Western front is being so long delayed. It has been due ever since the Russian collapse; the longer the delay the less German hope possible of its succeeding. So far as any actual danger exists of its succeeding, I am in a position to state



there isn't any. The harder the drive, the more dead Germans without proportionate Allied loss. So let them come and be damned to them—and the harder they drive the better.

I have seen pretty nearly every sort of soldier you can think of except Belgians, Serbians, Roumanians, and Italians. The most picturesque are the Turcos, French "Blue Devils" and Scotch kilties. British, Canadians, Australians, Russians, even Japanese, I've seen them all. The Japs were doing guard duty at the port where we landed; so were the Russians.

The Chinese who have been transported here in great gangs to do the heavy labor have attracted my attention particularly. All I have to say is that if the "yellow peril" ever boils over out of the Orient under the leadership of Japan, God help the lands it invades. These coolies, staring at us and jabbering away among themselves, remind you for all the world of gorillas. It is a remarkable fact that there is a striking similarity between the bestiality you see in their faces and that you see in the faces of the Hun prisoners who are also working in crowds all about. There is nothing surprising about seeing it in the faces of the Chinese, but you might have expected something more from members of a race which has had equal advantages with the other Western peoples for civilization. The interesting problem is not so much how to lick the Germans as what to do with them after they're licked. How such brutes can be permitted to continue to live next door to enlightened peoples is hard to see.

Well, maybe I can solve the question by sleeping over it. If not, I can at least prepare myself by getting plenty of sleep for dealing directly with friend Boche. So lots of love for both Dad and yourself, and remember me to all the friends. More soon. No letters yet. Good-night.

QUINCY.



January 15, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: It is true that I am a busy lad these days, but I will have to be a whole lot busier before I let my birthday go by without writing you a letter.

I am celebrating my natal day by writing this letter and by getting my hair cut. Just as I started to write to you one of the men from the company came in and advised me that he was ready to amputate my locks, so I sheathed the pencil and he unlimbered his shears and fell to. The result was hardly like a Broadway cut, more like "the sort that Mother used to make" by turning the bread-and-milk bowl over your head and whacking off all that showed. But 'twill serve, and the Lord knows I needed it.

The last cut I got was on the boat. And the barber who supplied me with that one was sure the Germans were such mighty men because they drank so much beer. England had made a fearsome mistake, in his opinion, in cutting down the beer ration, and the U. S. was stumbling fast after to perdition. Not the roast beef but the fine sack of old England had made her famous, in this seafaring barber's opinion, and the tears nearly trickled down his cheeks as he bewailed her latter day decadence. I almost staggered from his presence, too, I might add; the sale of intoxicants to soldiers was forbidden aboardship, but all you had to do to get a jag was go and smell the barber's breath.

To-day was the first time I was ever served by a barber in hip boots of the rubber variety, but I may have stranger cuts and closer shaves. This military barber was like his civilian brethren in garrulity. He descanted at length on that interpretation of a certain passage in the Book of Revelation according to which the war is going to end next month. I told him that while I wouldn't discourage his devotion to the Bible, just the same I would keep on learning to throw hand grenades and shoot automatic



rifles and jab bayonets, if I were in his place. I promised him, however, that if the war did end next month, any man in Co. G who beat me to a church to offer up my thanks would have to take a good start and run fast. I also promised him that in such a case I would be a regular attendant not only at Sunday school and church, but at prayer meeting and all the special services I could find out about, and that I would join all the churches, including the Roman Catholic.

I will assure you, moreover, that in case these prophets win out I am going to sing louder than S. M., pray louder than Uncle T. A., and look twice as sanctimonious as old man G. B. all the rest of my days. Anybody who gets anything on me for observing all the forms of piety will have to go some. Not that I am "skeered," or anything like that, but as between war and peace, give me peace—although not at any price; I am not too proud to fight, and I'm not too proud to sleep until 7:30 A.M. in an honest-to-God bed, either, instead of sleeping until 6 A.M. on an army cot, no matter how comfortable Bill Gramer's sleeping bag is.

The barber got me started and it's hard to ring off, but I guess I had better pass on to tell you that if nothing goes amiss I may see something of the Alps and Switzerland before I get home. The men are all planning their trips, and most of them vote for a triumphal return via China and the Golden Gate, but you know my weakness for the mountain tops and the hikes above the clouds. As to our future plans, I suppose that making them is waste of time, for if we last until Uncle Sam gets through using us he will pack us all off home in a bunch.

If everybody who wanted to wander around Europe got a leave of absence to do so, the whole American army would be roving over the map indefinitely, and large contingents of it tramping away from Monte Carlo on its



uppers if the prohibition against soldiers' gambling were raised. Now, the wheels may not revolve nor the cards fall for the wearer of a uniform. No wonder I can afford to send an allotment home; they won't let a soldier be anything but good.

Never mind. If I am 34 I still have the roaring forties ahead of me, and, believe me, after this experience I sure am going to make them roar. Hello! I had almost forgotten how I was going to join the church—or churches—and haunt the mourners' bench, but I guess I'll manage to arrange my schedule so I still may roar on Tuesdays and Fridays until I am 50.

No, I haven't had a darn drop to drink for my birthday. But the cooks made a pie about a foot and a half across with my name engrossed on the crust, and maybe it went to my head. Also, we had some more of those fine doughnuts for dinner. At that, I hope we may all eat my birthday dinner together in 1919, and that in the meantime you and Dad will not do any unnecessary worrying. With lots of love for both of you, and hoping to get a letter from you soon,

QUINCY.

January 20, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: I am inclosing a little present—a Jeanne d'Arc medal, which is insignificant in value, but as a work of art, I think, very fine. I would have preferred to get this in pin shape, but could not, so if you wish you can have the link at the top cut off, and a safety catch fastened on the back. You see my faith is great. In spite of the fact that I haven't got any since Christmas, I believe that letters still cross the Atlantic. Somehow I feel reasonably sure that my mail is getting home regularly, and I hope I am right.

The little shops in the town near here are queer combinations of business establishments, menageries, living



rooms and nurseries. In each one you will find the whole d— family, including the d— dog, congregated around the store stove to save fuel. Naturally, such places are not long on sanitation, but then there isn't much of that here except what we brought along with us.

While I was purchasing your Jeanne d'Arc medal yesterday a large red and green parrot was cocking his eye at me from his cage and screaming "Hello." When I went into my shoe shop to have "talons" put on my high boots I found a fine big Persian cat named Pierrot playing with everyone who came in, and with him I spent some time. Through the cranny of every door that stands ajar along every street you can see a dog's nose protruding. This is surely a land of pets, and sleek, fat ones they are too, war rations or no war rations. You can scarcely thread your way through the narrow streets without stumbling over dogs, big or little. They must consume enough grub to keep a company moving, at least.

But everybody feeds well. For dinner, or lunch, at the hotel yesterday I had—shades of the battle of the Marne!—sauerkraut and "sossidges" (and darn good the *mélange* was, too, I'll assure you), roast mutton and spuds, chocolate, neufchatel cheese, war bread, unsalted butter and "red ink." Not a bad meal that, for three francs fifty centimes, or about 60 cents in real money, especially considering that I encored on every course. I hardly had the face to look the proprietress in the eyes when I paid up. Quite a contrast, this, with the scraping and stinting I encountered in England.

Speaking of "real money" prompts me to remark that you get so much of this French stage money in exchange for a \$100 pay check—about what I am drawing now—that you feel like a millionaire. The stuff doesn't look like money, it doesn't feel like money, and it doesn't spend like money. It's like the chaff from wheat! Fill a bushel



measure with it and it doesn't weigh a thing. You get all your pockets stuffed with these flimsy franc notes of various denominations, and your natural inclination is to get rid of the stuff and get yourself comfortable. And, after you spend it, you find upon calculation that you have been spending real money—and haven't got anything in return. I'm keeping a \$1 bill in my pocketbook just so I can look at it from time to time and see what real money looks like. And when I get back to the States I'm going to have that souvenir dollar framed alongside a 5-franc note (a dollar is worth just about 5f. 70c. now) so that everyone will believe me when I say that all the stage money comes from France.

As an illustration of how you throw the stuff away: I was buying some things yesterday, and the proprietress of the shop had asked me 40 francs for something I fancied. I had already started to dig out the money when a friend who was along remarked, "That's sure an awful price to ask for that trifle, \$7.50." Instantly I caught myself (at the thought that in spending francs I was spending real money) and back the pocketbook went, and the deal was off. Not only that, but I immediately got sore at the idea that the woman was overcharging me. But had not my friend spoken up, the deal would have gone through without hesitation.

And, speaking of food, I have had lots of experience of a brand new sort since I have been acting as mess officer. As we have a mess sergeant who was in the provision business before he took up arms I have had really a very easy time of it. But food will run short sometimes, and unexpected things will happen. For instance, some 75 French infantrymen turned up the other day unexpectedly—they assist in the instruction of the American troops—after one of our field ranges they had been using had been dismantled. Consequently there was nowhere for them



to prepare the food they had brought along already cooked, but cold. It was a bitter day, with a sheathing of ice on the ground, and letting them eat cold food was out of the question. So I had our cooks take charge of the French "chow" and put it on our stoves—then lined the Frenchmen up and gave each one a steaming cup of coffee from a boilerful we had left over from breakfast. Well, sir, ever since that incident if I go anywhere near these Frenchmen I find myself shortly the center of a circle of admiring *poilus*, and, no matter which way I turn, heels click and hands go up in salute beside faces wreathed in smiles. Honestly, it seems to me that these men actually run around in front of me to get the opportunity to smile their gratitude. "It's things like that that count in this game," the Colonel advised me when I reported the disposition I had made for the Frenchies' comfort.

American "chow" is greatly prized by the French soldiers at all times, particularly our coffee; they will jump at every chance they can get to sink their teeth into American rations—and the American soldier is always ready to divide. There is an obvious camaraderie between Yank and *poilu*.

I am writing this letter in the army officers' Y. M. C. A. at [Langres] and am having a very comfortable time of it in spite of the dark, gray, drizzly day which is turning the streets slowly from sheets of glass to slippery slush outside. The officers' Y. M. C. A. is located in an ancient mansion, with a duly landscaped garden at its rear, which must have been the residence once of some very important folk. But latterly it has fallen upon days of shabbiness, and what was formerly coldness of splendor in its atmosphere has become absolute frigidity, considering the bareness of the walls and the scarcity of fuel. Nevertheless, the place has certain attractions, chiefly three American girls—honest-to-God American girls who can understand



what you say to them—who serve you with chocolate and taffy (all sorts), and make war seem considerably less like what Sherman said it was. One of the three is very pretty, and I made quite a hit with her right off the bat by assuring her that I hadn't seen anything in France that looked as good to me as she—a real American girl. It seemed that two young reserve captains had tried to kid her the other way 'round by telling her that they had mistaken her for a French mademoiselle, and she accepted their effort as a sort of back-handed compliment—and came and smiled on me. And the two caps got very sore, and I enjoyed myself greatly.

They serve very good chocolate here, and I drank considerably more than I wanted just for the pleasure of conversing with a girl who could bless my ears with real United States kidding while I drank. This idea of having companionable young women on hand to keep the officers company is pretty good psychology; it certainly lessens any attractions which any less respectable female companionship might have. For the most part, however, you don't have either time or energy left for much other companionship than your work.

Well, I must quit here and catch a truck back to the fort, or I'll have to walk through some of the rottenest road ever. So good by to Dad and yourself for this time. Much love.

QUINCY.



## CHAPTER X

BILLETED IN A VILLAGE—INTIMACIES OF FRENCH LIFE AT ST. CIERGUES—  
A LONE HAND IN RUNNING THE COMPANY—GAS MASKS—PLAYERS IN  
WAR—A COMPANY MASCOT.

THE next letters report a change of location and a change in conditions of life. New work is also indicated in the mention of throwing hand grenades. The move was made on January 17 to the village of St. Ciergues, a typical French farming centre a few kilometers from Langres. There was neither fort nor barrack, so the battalion was billeted on the homes of the population. Mills was quartered in the Hotel Fèvre, kept by Madame Victorine Delanne. Of the accommodations and the cuisine it is not necessary to speak, for Mills enters into enthusiastic details.

During practically all his stay at this place, the Captain and all the lieutenants of his company except himself and one other were detached for special instruction at the school for officers at Gondrecourt in the Vosges. He was therefore not only in command, but had much of the detailed duty of the platoons to carry on. How he did it is indicated in his letter of February 17 with the brevity of unconscious modesty.

As regards the letters which follow, it is proper to point out that they contained an increased number of passages and allusions which are not to be given here; from the time when he began to receive mail from home the interchange naturally involved many matters of a private



nature, family business, news of friends and relations and other strictly personal interests. These are not reproduced. There are also many mentions of letters and cards received from friends, and sundry gifts of smoking material, sweet stuff and extra warm clothing. Many and hearty thanks for all were sent home by Mills, with due specifications, for transmission to the writers and senders, likewise explanations and apologies as to the impossibility of direct acknowledgment. These, also, have been passed over. They would not be interesting to the general reader and they would occupy a good deal of space without furthering the aim of the book. The numerous allusions to the late Mr. William A. Gramer, the City Hall representative of the New York *Globe*, have been preserved as a special case.

Mr. Gramer, who died, to the great regret of all who knew him, on January 23, 1920, was a fellow newspaper worker, a comrade and a highly esteemed friend of Mills. He was of French descent and it was a matter of deep regret to him that his years and his health prevented him from going to France to fight. When Mills was getting his outfit together before sailing, Mr. Gramer gave him a pair of field glasses made in Paris. They were of the finest grade; nothing like them could have been bought in New York at the time; in fact it was hard to buy any sort of binoculars. Mr. Gramer also gave him a camp outfit consisting of a heavy felt sleeping bag, a fur cap and a fur foot warmer. In addition, he constantly sent over supplies of cigars of the excellent brand he smoked himself. Of these, mentions abound in the letters home, as has already been seen. Mills told his mother he thought that over and above the warm regard between them, Mr. Gramer looked upon him as in a sense his own substitute on the battlefield. With these explanations, the story



may be allowed to go on from Mills's pen, telling of his experiences at St. Ciergues:

January 23, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Since anything that has a cat on it is O. K., according to your notion, I risk inclosing this card. Incidentally, I have seen very few cats like the New York brand since hitting Europe, but I have found one or two who wear Sweet's white shoes and vest.

I know you will be interested to hear that we have moved, and are now enjoying the experience of being billeted in a tiny French village. I am very comfortably situated in the best hostelry the place affords, with a regular bed and an excellent French cook. In almost every respect I am much better fixed than I was at the fort, and if I could only get some mail I would be just about as contented as I could be away from my own people.

It was just two months ago to-day that I left the U. S. and it will be a month day after to-morrow since I have received any letters. All of us in the company are pretty much in the same boat. I hope you have not fared so badly with my communiqués to you. At any rate, I am working so hard that I can't lie awake worrying at night over my isolation. We came over here "to beat hell," and that's certainly the way I'm working.

Hoping you and Dad are both well, with lots of love,

QUINCY.

The memorandum which follows this note is dated January 19, two days after the 168th was billeted on St. Ciergues, and it shows the characteristic thoroughness with which Mills handled his company and the situation.



## One Who Gave His Life

COMPANY G, 168TH INFANTRY,  
ST. CIERGUES, FRANCE, JANUARY 19, 1918.

## Memorandum:

1. The men of this company are under no condition to enter houses, barns or other private buildings, other than those assigned to them as billets.

2. The hours during which they may enter drinking places are designated and they will take care not to be in such places at other times.

3. Latrines have been constructed, and the men will see to it that there is no pollution of the streets by themselves or visiting troops.

4. Men may wash in the compartments of the horse troughs farthest from the point where water enters. The troughs are usually in three compartments. Use the compartment from which the water overflows into the drain.

5. There will be no smoking or lighting of candles in billets in which straw is stored.

6. Blouses and overcoats must be worn buttoned at all times. Overcoat collars will not be turned up at any time.

BY ORDER OF QUINCY S. MILLS  
2nd Lieutenant, 168th Infantry  
Commanding Co. G.

SOMEWHERE ELSE IN FRANCE,  
[ST. CIERGUES],  
January 26, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: As I told you in my note of the 23d, we have moved, and I am now enjoying the experience of being billeted, which is not half bad, by the way. I am beginning to believe, too, that there is luck in moving, for yesterday's mail brought me the first batch of letters I have received since Christmas Day. There was one from you, dated December 14, in which you spoke of having received my two sailing notes of November 23; one from "the same old Bill Gramer" (he is certainly a



staunch friend), and a Xmas card from little Alice Morris, for whose thoughtfulness you will please express my deep appreciation. All this mail was postmarked around December 15. That's the way it seems to get here—in batches. And the trouble is that most of the batches seem to lose their way. What becomes of them the Lord only knows, but I am pretty sure they don't *all* go to Davy Jones's Locker.

As I had noted already in the papers the bitter New York weather I was not surprised to read in your letter of the stalled Broadway cars under our windows. The most amazing thing about your missive was that you didn't say a word about the cats in it. Am I to infer that you have served them all up *en casserole* in your effort to vanquish old General Hi Cost O'Livin'? Things have not yet come to that pass over here—not on this side of the Hindenburg line, at least.

I hope that you are faring better with the receipt of my letters than I am with yours. I figured that mine ought to be arriving in Wadsworth Avenue about January 1 at the latest. I hoped you might get the first one by Christmas. Before I get off the letter subject I will explain that I forgot to put the letter number at the head of my last letter. It should have been No. 5.

The "somewhere else" from which I am writing this is a quaint old village, the houses of which, seemingly as ancient as the land itself, are tucked along under the brow of a hill that looks down upon an artificial lake so beautiful that it seems to have been put here by the hand of Nature instead of man's. Although less rugged this country equals the Sapphire country of western North Carolina in beauty, and might well rival that locality in name, such are the sunset effects upon the rolling bluffs which hem in the valley and the others running into it.

The waters of the lake are confined by a dam which is an



architectural masterpiece to be classed along with Washington and High Bridges, and is not unlike High Bridge in general structure. The lake stretches away in front of my window, right opposite which the overflow water rushes down a spillway, built like a giant's staircase, over the steps of which the stream makes a constant roar that penetrates my chamber even when the window is closed. What surprises me is that no use is made of this water-power. The lake is the source of supply for the canal system in this section, but it could at the same time furnish the power to drive electrical turbines sufficient to light all the villages in the vicinity, and they dot the valleys everywhere. They are about as primitive as any hamlets imaginable. The one in which I am living now is probably typical, and it was certainly an unkempt place when we struck it. It is inhabited by peasant folk who had evidently never bothered to throw any slops farther than the door sills from the day the first little stone houses grew up with the narrow, rocky streets between them.

The first capacity in which we hit this place was as street-cleaners, and we will surely be able to qualify as "White Wings" if we ever strike New York again. We literally scraped off the dirt. I exaggerate only slightly when I say that had all the rubbish around the venerable cross, rising near the principal watering trough, been heaped together, the tin cans and other refuse would have hid the relic from view. The manure piles overflowed into the streets and the waste water from the numerous stone watering troughs mingled with the surplus to form an offensive paste very nearly shoemouth deep. All this filth we removed; we opened drains that appeared to have been clogged for ages, and built new ones; we even succeeded in restraining the sacred manure piles, although several efforts to secure entire changes of location for the most objectionable of them came pretty near to ending in riots.



For where we cherish bank accounts in the States they cherish manure heaps over here, and, from all appearances, some of the heaps have been handed down from generation to generation since the beginning of time. When you consider that while we did this cleaning up we kept on training, you can appreciate that we have been busy from reveille at 5:45 until dark each day.

While we have not yet got this transformed into a Spotless Town, we can live here without fear of pestilence, and we are proud of the job. Because of my busyness will quit for this time.

With much love for Dad and yourself, QUINCY.

January 30, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: From all the signs I judge that winter is over. When we moved here the face of the earth was covered with snow and ice. In a day, almost, the change came; in two or three the ice had disappeared from the lake and the snow from the hills. Almost overnight flannels became oppressive; it is very fatiguing now to drill in a coat.

I had no idea the seasons here were so far ahead of those at home. I rather looked for protracted cold. We are advised that we will not be bothered in that respect much more, but that we may count on a long rainy season to set in any day. I continue well; the health of the entire organization is remarkably good, in fact.

Hoping this finds you and Dad both well, with hopes for a letter and much love, QUINCY.

February 3, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: This has surely been our big week since arriving in France, for it brought us our first real mail since Christmas. Wednesday I received seven



letters from you and three from Dad, of which one had also an inclosure from you, and a large number of others, including two from dear little Alice Morris and a Christmas letter from —, which I appreciated greatly. And then to-day came four more letters from you along with several others, and the package of coffee. Right here I want to ask you to call up Mr. Luby and thank him for *The Evening Sun* clips. I now have the file up to December 22, and cannot tell you how much enjoyment it has given me.

I got so many letters in the first batch that it was not until Thursday night that I had them all read. I haven't much spare time, and whenever I could snatch a minute I read a letter until I had finished my mail-bag. *The Evening Sun* extracts I read in the same way, and, coming from the old shop, they are just like letters. They will occupy me for some time, for I read every line of them, and then turn them over and study the ads on their backs. All the clippings you inclose I also enjoy greatly. Send as many as you think will interest me. I have received every letter you had written me down to January 10, and am much relieved to know that my letters reached you regularly. I feared you might be suffering the same interruption that I was, and that you might be worried.

*The Evening Sun* clipping regarding Hughes's *Bayonet* interested me, but where they are getting time for such activities at Camp Lee I do not know, unless somebody is donating the funds to pay for all the work by civilian talent. I assure you there is no time or energy for such side-lines over here. The idea is a good one for building up the morale of the drafted men, and giving them an interest in their work, however.

It was kind of Miss — to remember me. Please express my appreciation for me for the card. All my friends must understand that if I do not have time to write



to them I always have time to think of them. When you see Mrs. — again tell her I have worn her sweater more than any other, and that it sure has kept me warm. Although I have been exposed a great deal, and have had none too much warmth indoors, I haven't suffered *any*. Of course I might have been more comfortable sometimes, but then so might you people back in New York with your coal shortage.

I had a letter of good wishes from Bob Adamson to-day, but he did not mention his munitions business venture. Mayor Mitchel, I see, is to be an aviation major. Well, he used to be able to "aviate" to pretty high altitudes when anybody got his goat at City Hall. Here's hoping he has much luck in the military branch of that activity.

I have to thank you for one of the heartiest laughs I have enjoyed in a long time at your likening me to Wilson "in certain ways." But that's another story, and the bugler has just blown taps, so I had better quit for this time and go to bed. With much love for both you and Dad, and regards for my friends,

QUINCY.

P.S. Here is a sprig of that French mistletoe which bears evidence of its quantity of berries.

Q.

February 7, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: I am inclosing a couple of clippings which will interest you, I know. You will probably have seen already the statement regarding the location of the American line on the Lorraine front. Am working very hard, but the work is interesting, and the only kick I have is that the nights aren't twice as long. I can sleep any old time.

This card gives you some idea of what being billeted is like,—except that the natives pictured on it are *highly* idealized. The most attractive of them are the kiddies, at



whose clumping around in their sabots I never get tired smiling. So far as I can observe the scarcity of young men in this country, it is no more marked than the scarcity of young women. As I haven't heard of the Republic's ordering its Amazons to the trenches, this strikes me as remarkable.

Hoping you folks are happy, and as well as I am,

QUINCY.

The card is a picture of the Hotel Fèvre with a great group of tourists posed in front of it.

February 10, 1918.

DEAR DAD: I rejoice with you heartily over your good news. I appreciate a whole lot your thoughtfulness in writing to me, and, of course, you know that my letters home to Mother are just as much to you as to her. I have written home pretty regularly, this being my chief relaxation. I have been away from this place only once since arriving for it is necessary to walk some three miles to get anywhere, and, besides, I have had my hatful of work. For a great deal of the time during recent weeks, I have had just about as much work and responsibility as if I had been a company commander. The drive has been hard, but it has been worth a lot to me in the way of experience.

Speaking of hatsful of work, we have put on the latest style in spring headgear—very appropriately with the opening of the season, for the winter is clearly over, and has been for three weeks—and the men are greatly tickled with the “indestructo” models Uncle Sam has issued to them. They refer to them jocularly as “tin hats”—just as they called the submarines “tin fish”—and bang each other over the head with sticks just to hear the metal ring. The helmets, while heavy, are not at all uncomfortable, after the first day or so getting used to them. I had



apprehended they might cause headaches, but no one has been bothered in that way. You have no idea what an improvement in the appearance of the company the helmets make. They give the ranks a uniformity they could never have with the old campaign hats without issuing new ones every day. I have never cared for the campaign hat and hope it will be abandoned; it is impractical, and is being discarded over here for fatigue wear in favor of the cap cut on the pattern of the French peaked cap.

All our work is very interesting now, the feature of it I like best being the throwing of live grenades. No doubt my preference for this feature is that I am considerably better than the average at it. If I were in the ranks, I would probably be one of some company's crack throwers. Of course, I get a lot of diversion, too, out of the pistol and rifle shooting, but they are old games in comparison with the grenade heaving. I have been having some experience with gas masks, also, but will not develop any liking for the wearing of these devices. One of them strapped on your head makes you feel as if you were in a diving suit. I hope we shall not have to wear them much when we see service, but in some sectors their use is necessary almost constantly.

This reminds me that I note in to-night's paper that the Germans are massing in the Belgian sector. From what Lieutenant Nelson says of the British state of preparedness on this front, behind which he has been at school, I haven't much apprehension of their making any impression to speak of there. And I understand that they will not find conditions any more favorable for them anywhere else on the Western front. Personally, it would surprise me if an American drive of any magnitude were launched this summer, although anything I say is only a guess. The French are insistent in the belief that Germany will not keep up for more than six months, but it



seems to me that things may drag along for a couple of years before the inevitable end comes.

Of course the French have a better line on things than we Americans have. There are certainly indications of Germany's crumbling power which are not to be overlooked. For instance, the number of "dead" shells from German batteries is said to be constantly increasing, and already of such proportions as to be remarkable. Nelson says all the Boche ammunition he came into near-personal contact with seems to him darned lively, but then he was a greenhorn at it. The papers are a great boon to us; for instance, if they can print that the American line is on the Alsace-Lorraine front, as they have printed, I can discuss the matter in my letters. And I know you folks are glad to get some sort of line on my whereabouts.

The news of General Leonard Wood's being wounded by shell fire, as printed in the Paris papers, was also most interesting to me. I did not even know he was over here, and I am wondering what significance his presence has. I was sorry to see in Friday's paper that the U-boats got the *Tuscania*, but the surprising thing is that they have got so few transports. These Paris editions of the American papers print news to-day, also, that the Russians have refused to sign a separate peace, which would be good enough, if true, to offset several transport sinkings.

I am surprised to note the accounts of Roosevelt's illness. What was the matter with his eye? I saw an editorial reference to his having lost it, but did not see the account of the loss itself. He has lived a mighty strenuous life, and it would not be extraordinary should he go to pieces pretty fast now that he has started.

As to the Blount story about the killing of so many Germans by one man, I hardly think it correct, as such an incident would have been widely circulated among the American forces. It is a fact that when the Germans got



in on that detachment of American engineers up on the Cambrai front one of our men who was armed only with a shovel got two Boches with it before they got him. That is the spirit of the men throughout. They are "as contented," as one of them wrote home, "with living in French barns as if they were staying at the Hotel Astor." Their letters on the billeting proposition are a constant source of diversion to me. "Billet is a society name for barn," wrote one. "We are located on the Rue de Manure," wrote another. "Every time I get out of bed, I have to kick a pig in the slats," said another. "Look out for me to be bucking and belling when I get home," warned still another, "for I have been living in a barn until I feel like I belong there." "I can feel my ears growing longer every day," declared one more.

They are as cheerful as if they had been used to this sort of thing all their lives, although you can hear them expounding to each other now and then as to "why the hell they must fight the Germans over these French manure piles?" I believe I had mentioned already that every village in these parts contains a cheese foundry. Well, the men got the story started that the inhabitants guard their manure piles so zealously because they age their cheese in them, and when the French heard this story through the medium of the interpreter, they failed to see the joke. The men swear that whoever has the biggest manure pile in town is made Mayor, and I must say that the Mayor of one village I know surely looks it.

While I would not mind being more luxuriously situated, I will consider myself lucky if I never know any lodgings more uncomfortable than those I now occupy. If we had plenty of fuel and sufficient oil for our lamps I really could ask for nothing better. I am getting so used to the illumination furnished by my trusty candle that when I get back to civilization I will be rendered owl-blind by



the lights. By the way, while I think of it, you would certainly confer a great favor on me if you would mail me a box of indelible pencils, something that will stand up. The lead of all I have bought over here is rotten.

We hear that the American Government has decided, at last, to treat the German prisoners in the camps back in the States AS prisoners, and no longer as star-boarders, which news creates great satisfaction in our hearts. It is a sign that the country is gradually awakening to the fact that it is at war. The case of Secretary-of-War Baker absorbs much interest. His testimony regarding the complete equipment of all the troops sent over certainly created comment. Well, this will have to be all for this time. I hope it finds you and Mother as well and as cheerful as your last letters left you. My regards to all the friends. With much love,

QUINCY.

February 13, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: I inclose a copy of our war paper, *The Stars and Stripes*, which may interest you. The box of cigars came yesterday, and many thanks to you and Dad both. Repeat on it as often as you like. The cigars are just the right sort. I would like to write you a letter to-night as I have a nice fire going in my big fireplace, but there is urgent necessity for my taking another one of those bucket baths.

Much love to both of you,

QUINCY.

P.S. Your letter of Jan. 18 just to hand. The inclosed clipping showing one of my letters as printed in *The Evening Sun* interests me a whole lot as one of Gen. Pershing's orders is: "DON'T let your people at home print your letters in the newspapers." And DON'T do it any more, for it would be just about as hard to identify me as the writer of that letter as if my name were printed.



And if there is anything that "Black Jack" is understood to mean in these parts it is what he says. QUINCY.

February 17, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: I am glad to know that my letters have been reaching you uncensored, glad and somewhat surprised, too, for I thought maybe the base censor (the men whose letters I have to pass upon are of the opinion that all censors are base and that I am the basest of the lot) might object to some of the stuff I have been writing although I could see nothing wrong with it or I would not have written it. The only thing I have had interfered with was a postcard which I inclose with its return envelope. I was admonished that American soldiers may not write postcards to persons in the countries of our Allies, although we may write them letters. This seems hard to comprehend on its face, for it would seem that anyone wishing to transmit information would have less trouble doing so in a letter than on a postcard, although there must be some sufficient reason for the ruling.

As to the erasing of the ship's name in the two letters you refer to, and the elimination of the dates, especially on the note mailed in New York, I did all that myself to avoid the possibility of delaying the delivery of my messages. So my stuff has been going through untouched. I am inclined to believe that the men's mail receives no further scrutiny than that which the company officers give it, and I can assure you that so far as this company is concerned the scrutiny is severe. It is very seldom that any man says anything objectionable, but every now and then some smart fellow tries to slip one over.

Your inquiry regarding whether I have wine with my meals involves one point on which vigilance must be exercised in censoring, for if the men write home that they can get anything to drink, and the "White Ribbons" get



hold of the fact, a certain sanctimonious element will raise the howl that our soldiers are being permitted to become drunkards. As you know, the sale of champagne, cognac, and all highly intoxicating liquors to officers, or men of the A.E.F., has been strictly forbidden, but "Red Ink" and beer are permitted within certain hours each day. Consequently you may rest assured, since you seem so inquisitive on the subject, that I enjoy my light wine and beer whenever I feel like it.

In reference to the prohibition against stronger drinks, there is an old saying in the army "you can't beat a soldier," but as far as this company is concerned the tendency to drink to excess is amazingly small. I have been surprised more than I can tell you to find this bunch of soldiers, or any bunch of soldiers, as orderly and law-abiding as it is. The men got two months' pay at once the other day and there was hardly any dissipation worth mentioning. The same holds true regarding their morals in general. This is a record to be proud of. I do not believe that all the soldiers the United States sends over will do as well as these, but I do believe that the men of this company will continue to live according to their past high standard.

You remember I always spoke highly of these men to you, and the longer I am associated with them the better I think of them. The Sergeant you liked so much, Koester, is still as much of a favorite with me as ever. He has been off to a special training school and is likely soon to be commissioned a Second Lieutenant, as he deserves to be, although the company will lose in him a Sergeant that it cannot replace. He is one of the best soldiers in the company, and his parents being of German birth bitterly opposed his entering the army to fight against their "Fatherland." There is no question of his loyalty, either, so you see German-Americans are not all bad.



The Captain, Lieutenants Younkin, Rubel, Nelson and Pearsall have just returned from special school—quite an extended one, so you may rest assured that I have had my hands full. Although I did not go to school I did not lose anything in the way of experience. And the Captain was pleased with the condition of the company when he returned, too. Lieutenant Millikin and myself will get a course of schooling later, but I would prefer to have some experience at the real thing first. I am sure that the benefit would be much greater in the long run.

You need not worry about me, for I am not likely to undergo any great or real danger for some time. Indeed, it would surprise me very much if any extensive American offensive should be launched this summer, for several reasons, although this is merely a guess, and is not to be interpreted as meaning anything. I can say, though, that we are looking for the much heralded German drive, and I assure you we are ready for it on this side of the Hindenburg line. I note in the Paris papers that an offensive against Rumania is reported, and it wouldn't surprise me greatly if this should be the next thing to develop. Success will be easier there, and success is necessary to keep up the spirit of the German people.

Regarding my personal experience since I have been over here, I will say that while two silver bars are more to be cherished than one gold or silver one for your shoulder, rank is largely a relative matter, below the grade of Major particularly. Owing to the development of modern warfare, good lieutenants are more essential to a company than a good captain. I am happy to say that a real liking has grown up between Lieutenant Nelson and myself. There is in him a sort of "excellent dumb discourse," as Bill Shakespeare says, which is satisfying. He has less to say than any other of the officers in the company and the men like him better than anyone else.



By the way, he tells of a little experience while up on the British front which I know will interest you. Toward dusk one day, when everything had been quiet, he climbed out on the edge of a first-line trench, just to look the scenery over. Well, he had not been down off the parapet more than ten seconds before a string of bullets from a Boche machine gun whined through the atmosphere he had been displacing. The British sentry gave him a horse laugh, and he is now a firm advocate of my "keep your head down" policy.

You asked me some time ago about knitting things for me. My present supply should last me, according to my present rate of consumption, through another four years of war, but, of course, I may never see again the stuff that I have to store through the summer. Therefore, if you will send me a sweater and helmet in time for cold weather this fall it may be a wise precaution. You ask about the most useful things to send, these are sweaters, helmets and socks. Also, if some means could be devised of knitting gloves of hard coarse wool they would be a great boon to the enlisted men who wear out more gloves than they can get. The wristlets do not afford the protection necessary. They are great to wear over gloves to keep the wind from sneaking up the sleeves, but the gloves are necessary in the first place. The knitted scarfs are not very practical.

In sending things to our men over here one great want is being almost totally overlooked. It is candy. You have no idea how the men crave it. I believe that even those that smoke would often take it in preference to tobacco. Sweets are extremely scarce and the prices asked for them are prohibitive. Anyone who started a candy fund would confer the greatest boon I know of on the American soldiers. Any kind of candy, the very cheapest sort that comes in buckets, the broken sticks, you know, would be devoured greedily. I hope you will get this into print



anonymously, as coming from one who knows. Take up the matter with the "Red Cross" and any other people who are interested in the comfort of our men overseas. While the "Doc" Peases object to giving to tobacco funds, I do not believe anyone would object to giving to a candy fund.

The last letter of yours I have received is No. 7, so I am still shy letters 5 and 6. I suppose they will be along in due season. Speaking of seasons, your idea that France is eternally sunny will be further jarred when I inform you that we are just entering on a rainy period which we are told will last from four to six weeks. I am prepared for it with my heavy boots and shoes, and waterproof coat, so you need not worry. Well, I will have to quit for this time; I have made quite a letter of it, and guess you need a rest anyway. With lots of love for both of you, and regards to the friends,

QUINCY.

February 24, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Old Man Winter is playing the same sort of trick on us that he usually plays over in the United States. He is coming back for a little return trip after fooling us into thinking he's on his way. Fine crisp weather for working, though, and hope it lasts.

QUINCY.

February 24, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: I have been so busy lately writing in answer to your letters that I have neglected to tell you a lot of things about my life here.

I have been living in the best room of a little inn run by a Mme. Delanne who is, I believe firmly, the best cooker of French fried potatoes in France. In fact, it wouldn't surprise me at all to learn that she had invented the dish



and been decorated with the Legion of Honor therefor. Her hot chocolate is equally fine, and we consume great quantities of both. She prepares our officers' mess, the provisions being supplied by us, and each of us pays her a franc a day for her services. We have worked her nearly to death feeding us. At meal time it is one continuous yell of "Madame, pommes de terre tout de suite, s'il vous plait!" and "Madame, chaud chocolat tout de suite, s'il vous plait!"

It didn't take her a day to name us "tout de suite Americans" because we want everything right on the dot. Her regular reply when we ask for anything is "Voila, messieurs, tout de suite, à la minute!"

We don't always get it on the minute, but then we demand a great deal. She has taken mighty good care of us, looking out for our laundry and all our personal wants and putting herself out to make us as comfortable as possible.

To go back to her pommes de terre, she fries them in a deep bath of cocoa butter, and in an old-fashioned iron kettle suspended over an open fire by a crane, in a great fireplace of the sort you see now only in pictures, over home. Some of her cooking she does on a small range, but I notice that whenever she wants to prepare anything particularly nice she goes to the old open fireplace. There's no doubt about the fact that there is a flavor about open fireplace cookery which modern culinary inventions cannot supply.

It is quite an experience to live in these old houses, with their ancient open fireplaces and also to sleep in these French beds. They are like our old four-posters without the posts, and every one of them has on top of it a great down pillow as wide as the bed, and reaching from your feet to your neck, which surely keeps in the heat. These pillows are usually made of red silk, and are stuffed to the



thickness of about a foot. They and the beds are evidently heirlooms which have, to all appearances, been handed down in each family from the time of Joan of Arc. There is hardly a room, either, in which there is not either a picture or a statuette of Joan. There is a statuette a foot high on the dresser in front of which I am now writing. There is also a diminutive shrine in every sleeping apartment, with a crucifix and a rosary, for the population is almost entirely Roman Catholic.

Also, an essential of every chamber in every house in France seems to be at least one clock, the more ornate the better, which positively will not run under any conditions. Many of these timepieces are of the "grandfather" variety and of such remote antiquity, judging from all appearances, as to make our American heirlooms seem infantile in comparison. Of antique chests and wardrobes there is the greatest profusion. With the exception of a few iron beds I haven't seen a piece of really new furniture in a single house I have entered. Naturally the men view these French people as hopelessly behind the times, and as greatly inferior to us Americans.

As to the French manner of living we have come in contact with, it was pretty well described by our chief cook who said to me the day we moved into our village: "Lieutenant, I had to chase an old woman and her ducks out of house and home to get a place for our kitchen." That's about the size of it. The animals and fowl are members of the family, and it is no unusual thing for a dwelling to be built to house the human contingent in one end, and the rest at the other. It looks queer to see right alongside the front door a small door in the stone wall through which the chickens and ducks pass in and out. All the walls are of stone. I haven't seen a frame residencesince landing in France. And where the roofs are not of tile they are of stone too. In the small towns, stone



shingles, chipped from a slaty sort of rock common in this region, are the regular thing. I don't believe they would know over here what a wooden shingle was. The weight of these stone roofs must be enormous, but if you go inside and take a look at the timbers supporting them you understand why the buildings do not collapse. These hewn rafters remind me of the sort of material of which the frame of our old home at Statesville is made.

For water supply there are numerous fountains in the smaller towns, and in the cities too, although the latter have regular systems of waterworks also. In every municipality there is at least one public wash house for cleaning clothes. It consists of a shallow stone basin, some 25 by 50 feet, holding about a foot of water which is kept always clear by plenty of inlets and outlets and a copious flow. The stone sides of the basin are sloped at the washboard angle and the washerwomen scrub the soiled clothes right on the smooth surface of the rock. They do mighty nice jobs, too, I find. Over each wash house there is a roof, but there is never any provision for fire, and the laundresses' work looked cruelly cold this winter.

Everything is built of stone; you might think that there never had been any other building material in France. And when you come in personal contact with the careful conservation of the forests over here you understand why. You know there is a saying that if you kill a "nigger" in Georgia nobody cares, but kill a "cracker's" razorback hog and you will be lynched. Well, if you chop down a sapling as big as your wrist over here in France you are certainly in danger of judgment, and from the way about forty Frenchmen start to chattering at you about it you think you're in danger of hell fire. You may think nobody sees you make the raid, but before you get through you find that everybody in the whole department must



have been looking at you. Naturally these people have to be careful of their forests. If they had not watched them for generations there would be no wood at all. As it is, the frequency with which you see wooded sections is surprising. It is a pity that the Americans cannot exercise a little foresight, and prevent the destruction of the forests in our country.

There is considerable game here, too. You see great flocks of wild ducks, and although the wild boars keep under cover there are freshly uprooted sections of turf on our drill ground every day showing that they have been feeding there overnight. Every now and then I see a bear's carcass hung out at a butcher's shop, and I hope to get a taste of the meat sometime.

Well, enough for this time. Much love to Dad and yourself, and regards to all the rest. QUINCY.

February 27, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: When you cast your eyes on the smaller of the two pictures inclosed herewith I know you will remark: "What chance have the Huns, anyway?" But the larger card will afford the necessary comic relief. My friend, Sol Rubel, and I certainly look like the Star Low Comedy Duo, or as if we had been up to some devilment or other—and maybe we had. For life is not all one monotonous grind, by any means.

Never before laying my eyes on this larger picture had I suspected myself of being so thoroughly British, but those legs convict me fully and finally. And the cap, being of the British army general model, adds to the effect.

This is the first opportunity I have had to send a picture home, but I hope I may be able to do better in the future. I would appreciate a picture of you and Dad.

Much love,

QUINCY.



The photographs were small and very unflattering likenesses of himself and Lieutenant Rubel. In the smaller ones, taken separately, both looked quite unnecessarily grim and threatening. The larger one shows them together, wreathed in smiles.

March 3, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Here is a programme which I think will interest you. I went to see the little French farce at one of those *Theâtres des Poilus* you have read about. The male contingent of the stage folk was made up of soldiers; the actresses must have been of the best in France for the play was done as well as the best you see on Broadway. I am sorry to say that there was very little of the plot I could make out, but the acting was sufficiently vivacious to keep my attention. Besides, two of the actresses were unusually easy to look at besides being real artists.

I had the pleasure of having dinner in the same dining room with the players before the show and the meal was as good as the play. The members of the cast certainly had a good time, and everyone else had a good time watching them. You would never have thought, had you not known, that these people were citizens of a country engaged in the fiercest war in history. I understand that the actors of established reputation while required to render military service are not exposed to the greatest danger. The men who took part in this performance are employed driving trucks along the lines of transportation. The musical part of the program was rendered, you will note, by the 168th Regiment, but not our 168th. Oddly enough both the American and French regiments of this number are located in this same section.

The audience at this soldiers' play consisted of people from the town as well as soldiers, and I was struck at the remarkable resemblance of the civilians to our own



people. Had I been deaf so that I might not have been tipped off by the foreign tongue in which they chattered, I might have taken them for Americans. The price of admission for the performance was three francs, and it was about as well invested as any money I have spent in France. I find that I can get as much out of the French movies as I do out of those at home, for I can read easily the explanatory sentences projected on the screen in French as you have them in English. Thus far I have been unable to find any of the weekly film reviews of the news, however, and I miss these greatly. The price of the movies is twenty-five centimes, or about five cents.

While on this show subject I might mention the fact that often as I have sat watching the fog rising over the lake in front of my window I have thought of those stage fogs we used to see at the Metropolitan and the Manhattan. I surely have grand opera scenery all around me, so much of it, that somehow the whole life in which I am moving seems unreal and dreamlike. The longer I remain here the more firmly convinced I am that this is the most beautiful country in the world. Yet this is not the best part of France. The ground is very rocky and unproductive. I have seen fields in which I believe fully three quarters of the matter turned by the plow was stony, running all the way from pebbles to pieces of flint as big as your fist. How anything ever grew on it I do not see. The people raise many cattle, and cheese foundries are the principal industries except in certain centres.

I visited a glass factory and saw the blowers at work making everything from lamp chimneys to champagne glasses and decanters. In another building skilled workmen were finishing cut glass products. Most of the employees were women and girls. There wasn't a man in the place fit for military service. The male portion of the



working force consisted of young boys, or men too old to stand the work in the trenches.

I sent you a card several days ago remarking that Old Man Winter, after having to all appearances departed, had decided to pay us a return visit, and this reminds me to remark on something I had intended to mention all winter: the fashion in which the kiddies run around barelegged, even in the bitterest weather. The Scotch kilties have nothing on these French kiddies in respect to bare shanks. I cannot tell you how funny one of these diminutive urchins looks cavorting around in the snow with a pair of sabots, each one nearly as large as his head, hung on to pipe stem legs, which you eye with the expectation of seeing them broken short off by the tonnage of sabot, at any minute. Even the big fifteen-year-old boys go barelegged thus. But I might mention that, while the legs of young France are slender, there must be a sudden expansion all at once around the twentieth year, for never have I seen sturdier underpinning than that which supports France's soldiery. There must be something exceedingly invigorating about that fresh air treatment for the shins.

I have had it in my mind also, many times, to tell you about our latest company mascot, a dog, of course. He was donated to us by a Major back from the front who found himself suddenly saddled with a roving commission which rendered keeping a dog impossible. So we got the pup, a diminutive black ball, just about the size to fit in your pocket, and he was ensconced in the guard house, that being the only place where there was a fire constantly going, and there was no danger of his being frozen to death. As he hung out at the guard house he was known as "the guard house bum," the term applied to the soldier who is always under lock and key. This, shortened for convenience sake, gives our mascot's name: Bum. He has



grown astonishingly fast, and is already large enough to be always where he has no business, to be stealing shoes, leggings and other equipment, and making himself the life of the company generally. He swarms into everything everywhere with the result that he usually resembles an animated mudpie more than a dog, but when the weather gets warmer and we can wash him, we can correct that. He has an uncontrollable inquisitiveness regarding, but a wholesome respect for cats. Altogether he is *some dog*, and is about the first of his kind I have been genuinely attached to, although I must admit he has given my dignity some rude knocks. On more than one occasion at retreat—a very solemn function—when I have been standing rigidly at salute during the playing of the *Star Spangled Banner*, and the company equally rigid at present arms behind me, he has come sailing out of the kitchen and cut circles around my legs and yipped at me, thereby sending a titter down the entire line and all but breaking up the ceremony. I venture to say that he would be missed, if lost, more than any other one member of the company, not excepting the Captain. He is spoiled, in a canine way, worse than your Sweet Cat. I hope we do not lose him.

I am going on the last cigars of that box Dad sent me, so you can repeat just as often as is convenient. The men who write home for tobacco are divided about half-and-half in declaring, the one that this French tobacco is so strong it would knock a mule down, and the other that the darn stuff is so weak you can't tell you are smoking it. Personally, I have got some very good tobacco here, but then I prefer the home cigars, and I have a notion that half the satisfaction I get out of them is in receiving them. You have no idea how much the receipt of mail means to all of us. Somehow there has been another jam in the mail service, and we have not had anything from home to speak of in a fortnight. The package from Mrs. —



containing the cigars and the diary came, however, as a very pleasant surprise on Washington's Birthday, and I sat down at once and wrote her a note thanking her.

The clipping from *Le Matin* which I enclose about New York's practice of self-denial may be exactly according to facts, but, knowing New Yorkers as I do, I have my doubts as to whether they are visiting upon themselves any such frightfulness in the way of self-denial as is here outlined. Certainly the people over here do not seem to have found it necessary to deny themselves greatly. There is plenty to eat for all, and the prices are by no means prohibitive. For instance, eggs bring from four to five francs a dozen, which is about the price they were fetching in New York when I left.

The news is very boring lately, there being nothing happening worth telling up front so far as the papers we see indicate. The Russian situation keeps progressing from bad to worse, until I cease to have any opinion whatever regarding it. The one thing developed by it thus far seems to be that making peace with Kultur is equivalent to being conquered by Kultur.

Hoping that this finds all well, with much love for Dad and yourself,

QUINCY.

March 6, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Just at the last minute before closing my letter of the 3rd, I received the three pictures I inclosed. Here are three more. The groups include all of us officers at this place. They are very good indeed, I think. You will note that the pictures show us in two different gas masks. We are supplied with the most complete anti-gas equipment that has been furnished to any troops in the war, so we are protected in that respect as well as we can be.



If properly used this protection is absolutely *sure*. Therefore you needn't lose any sleep over the dreaded gas. Because of their lack of material the Germans have a mask which furnishes them wholly inadequate protection, which explains their present agitation for the elimination of this "inhuman" means of warfare—that and the fact that experience has proved that weather conditions favor us six times in the use of gas to once for them. So they will get plenty of their own medicine in the long run.

Love,

QUINCY.

The pictures enclosed were photographs of nine officers of the Company, including himself, wearing their gas masks. They are shown standing on a stone bridge. It is hard to say whether the effect is more comical or gruesome. Needless to say, all are totally unrecognizable.

Apropos of his mention in the letter of March 3, of attending a show at one of the *Theâtres des Poilus*, Mills also spoke in a letter to Mrs. John Morris, a friend and neighbor of the family, of the French soldiers at a motion picture play. He said: "The audience was composed entirely of soldiers, mostly French. They romped like children—or kittens—in the bright moonlight outside after the show. I have never seen anything to equal the gayety of these *poilus*. They seem never to have heard of worry. One of the films last night was a John Bunny feature. It made me feel queer to watch the acting of a man who has been dead two years."



## CHAPTER XI

REAL WAR—THE 168TH GOES INTO THE TRENCHES AT BADONVILLER—  
EXPERIENCES UNDER FIRE—FIGHTING AND RESTING—MARVELS OF  
CIVILIAN COURAGE.

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE [BADONVILLER], March 15, 1918.

DEAR MR. LUBY: Well, we're just back from doing our first "hitch in hell" and I assure you I have plenty to write about. No hairbreadth escapes for myself, to speak of, although I know what the smash of a shrapnel shell explosion feels like when it drives the air up against your body, and how the spatter of the shrapnel charge sounds lighting all around you. Also, I can assure you that there is nothing pleasant about the whine of a sniper's bullet, much like the noise made by an angry hornet, penetrating inquisitively into the trench atmosphere in your immediate vicinity.

My company was extremely fortunate in suffering no casualties worse than a few wounded, but this does not detract from the fact that the men bore themselves like veterans. Their only regret on coming out was that they hadn't had the opportunity to come in personal contact with Fritz. There is no doubt about the fighting quality of the American soldier. We were sent in to get our first experience in a "quiet" sector. It was quiet when we went in—now it very closely resembles a hornet's nest into which someone has poked a sharp stick. When the Boches found there were Americans there they undertook to pull off a raid similar to the one described in the *Saturday Evening Post* of December 29, 1917, under the caption



of "The First Raid." If you didn't read that story get it and read it. So far as it goes, it is identical with the official report, excepting of course the incidents culled by the writer from the wounded in the hospital. The thing that amazed me was that the printing of so much of the truth was permitted.

Artillery support was lacking for our men in that first raid; this time it wasn't, and the Huns not only got no prisoners but suffered severe punishment. Then, in a day or so, we "put on a show"—as army parlance goes for starting a fight, just to show them that whenever they start anything with American troops they can expect better than they send. For every shell they sent over in their attack, they got back at least five. It is no exaggeration to say that their front line in this sector was literally mashed to pieces, so completely annihilated by great shells that the Huns have made no attempt at reconsolidation, but have simply withdrawn for some 300 yards depth on a considerable front.

During this fight, as during our stay at the front, I was on the battalion staff, and I had the good fortune to be able to witness the whole show from the top floor of headquarters. From the window on one side of the mansion used as a headquarters building I could see, by the aid of my field glasses, the havoc being wrought by our shell fire, and from the windows on the other side I could see the effect of the German shell on our own batteries—or where they thought our batteries were. You have heard that the Germans' powder is now of inferior quality; I can testify that this is true, for I believe that full 50 per cent of the shells that hit among our batteries were "duds," or failed to explode. Their shells were striking about 300 yards from headquarters, and I could see clearly when they struck and when they failed to explode; a detachment of engineers was busy all the next morning setting off the



"duds." As further proof of the poor quality of German ammunition, out of a series of twelve shots which I counted while they were being fired at a French airplane, one afternoon while I was in the trenches, only three exploded. The Frenchman flew low over the Hun positions, and didn't seem to pay any attention at all to the fire directed at him.

The noise of the bombardment was an exceedingly exciting thing to a freshman at war. Right behind us the 75s were barking viciously all the time; the machine gun barrage went over us, and there is no sound quite as wicked as that made by machine gun bullets cracking like millions of whips in the air overhead; from away back to the rear came the thunder of the great guns pumping away in a steady roar that made the walls rock and the windows rattle as if they were going to fall out. The sound of heavy artillery in a bombardment is more like the steady pulsating of a great ship's engine than anything else I can think of; it has the same resolute thrust and drive; there is something intoxicating about it; there is nothing else which can inspire the men with confidence so much.

But don't think I was observing things from absolute safety. Shrapnel burst all around us during the bombardment, felling one French soldier in the street before headquarters. And a German airman flew up and down over us sprinkling the streets with his machine gun; unfortunately for him he ran across the line of sights of one of our machine guns as he started home, and his machine landed in flames just back of his front line. For my part, headquarters was just about the last place I wanted to be when there was a show on, but I always had to report there forthwith. The afternoon I walked into the remains of the town in which our headquarters were located, a big German shrapnel shell burst where the housetops had been, about 100 yards ahead of me. It was one of five



with which the Huns repeated their "registration" on headquarters, just to remind us that they had it down pat. Everybody fully expected the headquarters building to be wiped off the map every time anything started, and the amazing thing is that it is still standing untouched, for the Huns know its exact use as well as its exact location.

The town in which it stands, about half a mile back of the lines, has been about half destroyed by shell fire. I could not accustom myself to seeing a civilian population there, the women going about their household tasks as if nothing unusual were happening, and only ducking indoors when a burst of shrapnel let go a little closer than usual, and the children trotting daily to school in a building, the windows of which are barricaded with logs against shell splinters. But most of the civilians had moved out by the time we left; a number of houses were hit during our occupancy, and everybody expects the rest of the town to be razed by German guns now that it is sheltering Americans who raise so much trouble. The last night I was there, a big shell let loose so close to the building in which I was bunked that the concussion raised me right up off my bunk, and a similar dainty calling card dropped right at the corner of the house the next morning just before we left. We are now in reserve in a town further back, but still within shell range. By the time you get this we will be back in our divisional area again getting ready for our next hitch.

One of the greatest worries up front is gas. The Germans make little use of cloud gas in this region, but they are always sending over bursts of gas shells. One burst in the road about twenty yards ahead of me the day I went up front, close enough to spatter mud on me. But it wasn't close enough to get the gas to me before I had my respirator on.

The soldier is required to be able to put on his anti-gas



paraphernalia in six seconds. I got mine on in about 6-10 of a second, and by the time the second was up had high-balled it into a friendly dugout. That was about the only time I put in in a dugout while the shells were popping up front, but take my word for it I had to conquer an almost irresistible impulse to duck into every dugout I passed on my way to headquarters (and *no* dugout) whenever there was a show on. I was twice slightly gassed, but suffered no serious effects either time. I inclose three pictures which may interest you. In one of the groups we are wearing our French gas masks; in the other we have the English box respirators up at the alert position ready to put on in the six seconds I mentioned.

Please forward this letter to my Mother, for her to read as soon as you have finished reading it, but do not send her the pictures as I intend these for you. I have mailed others to her already.

I see by the papers that Secretary Baker is over paying us a visit. I hope he will see things just as they are, and will make an exact statement regarding them on his return. He will find soldiers to be proud of, men who deserve the fullest equipment and preparation possible in order that they may make the most of the will to fight with which they are unquestionably inspired.

I have received from home copies of several of my letters printed in *The Evening Sun*, but suppose that before this reaches you my letter will be received requesting that no more of my letters be printed, and stating the reason for the request.

Give my regards to all. Hoping this finds you all feeling as fine as I do after sixteen hours' sleep I enjoyed last night on "coming out,"

MILLS.

In the last five letters included in the foregoing chapter, those of February 24 and after, Mills had been resorting



to a benevolent camouflage. They read as if they were written at St. Ciergues, like their predecessors and amid the comparative peace of the training period. In reality, the battalion had left the village on February 19, had reached the fighting front, had been in combat, had undergone the experiences described in the letter just given, and was safely back in the rear for rest and recovery after its first tour of duty on the front lines.

Just what the mental process was which led Mills to this course, it is not easy to figure out, for he must have known that if anything happened to him, his parents would be notified, while by no means could letters telling of his move to the front reach them before that first period of acute peril was over. There is no use speculating on the point; his motive was unquestionably kindly; probably, when he wrote, he felt so near to home and kindred that the details of the time factor did not impress themselves on his consciousness. At any rate, even in breaking the news directly to his parents he took the method of gradual approach as the three succeeding notes will show:

March 10, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Only time for a note now. Your letter of Feb. 2 and one from —— came to-day. Also two from "the same old Bill Gramer," saying that he had started a package of smokables on its way to me. Guess it will be in soon.

Am having some interesting experiences to write you about later. If this paper smells of powder, not the talcum sort, do not be surprised or alarmed, for I will be a good many miles from the line long before you receive this missive.

Love to all,

QUINCY.



March 13, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Within a few days I hope to be able to write you more in detail regarding some highly interesting experiences up here at the front line. Our sector was quiet—when we got here, but we sure stirred things up. Friend Fritz tried to start something, but got a darn sight more than he sent.

We will be back in our previous location for some time. It will seem a little odd not to see air fights, and hear artillery working all the time.

Haven't had any hairbreadth escapes, but haven't been in what you might term exact safety, by any means.

Love for Dad and yourself,

QUINCY.

The following dated March 15 with its enclosure dated March 10 and its explanation make clear his intention and his plan. After this, there was no more attempt to maintain false confidence. His proximity to danger once revealed had to be taken for granted as a constant factor.

March 15, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Here's a letter which I wrote with the full intention of taking it up front and sending it from there, so that you would not miss hearing from me regularly; and then I had to rush off in such a hurry, being sent off on almost no notice a day ahead of the company, that I left this letter in my trunk!

I send it now at the same time that I am sending a letter to Mr. Luby, descriptive of some of my experiences of recent days. I am asking him to forward it to you as soon as he reads it, and I suppose it will hardly be necessary to ask you to make a copy of it. Please pardon me for not sending you this letter first, but I feel that I owe him such a letter, and I do not want to repeat all that I say in it in another letter to you. Time's too scarce.



I am very well indeed, having enjoyed sixteen hours' sleep last night to enable me to catch up what I had lost in the nine nights previous. Hope this finds you and Dad well, also the Morrisises and other friends.

QUINCY.

[THE ENCLOSURE]

March 10, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: I have just received your letters of January 13 and 15, all the more welcome for their being nearly two months old. I am sorry to note that, from your reference to the passage of a fortnight between the receipt of letters from me, the mail service in your direction is also far from all that could be desired. For my part, I have long ago ceased to look for mail. When I get it I am just ahead that much more than I expected. I realize that the difficulties of transportation are great, but I do believe that the army mail service could be greatly improved at no additional cost, and no improvement could contribute more to the contentment of the men.

I am glad you sent me the enclosure from — and I am surprised to learn of his intention of entering the aero service. I am not well enough acquainted with the demands of an observer to judge his fitness for the work. If he undertakes it I hope he will find himself able to render useful service there. Candidly, I do not see that at the present stage of the game, it is incumbent upon a man in his position to quit the support of his family. The aero service is hazardous, as you know, although much less so in the observation than in the combat branch, and he should be sure that his family will be well provided for in the future if he goes into it.

Many thanks for your solicitude, but there is nothing that I can think of in addition to the cigars which you



need send me. Of the necessities of life we have sufficient, and of some of the luxuries too. One of these I might mention is French chocolate, which owes its particularly delicious flavor, possibly, to the fact that they make it always in heavy earthenware vessels. You might try this in making cocoa or chocolate, and see if there is any difference. After making a supply of chocolate the French cook places it in an enameled ware receptacle to keep it hot, but the actual preparation is always in an earthen dish.

To get back to the cigars, I will thank you in advance now for the second box, which will probably arrive just about the time my present supply gives out. Which means, of course, that the dispatching of the third box, and then the fourth, etc., etc., will be in order after the receipt of this letter.

The clipping of ——'s work which you sent interests me, but I am glad I am not over here to write stuff about the war while *it is going on*. After it is over will be time enough for that. War corresponding is done almost entirely second-hand, and I doubt if —— will see any real action. If I chance to meet him, I will congratulate him on having joined the "Deep Dugout brigade," an appellation relished by those to whom it is applied just about as much as "slacker" is.

This reminds me that we are having quite a laugh on Lieutenant Rubel, because he is in receipt of a draft board notice that has been forwarded to him all the way from the United States summoning him peremptorily to appear and be examined for military service, and giving him large chunks of hell for not having presented himself sooner. We call him "The Slacker."

Your tentative suggestion that I may have celebrated my birthday with wine and song, but without the women was a very safe hazard. The women aren't—not in this province—although I have been given to understand by



more experienced veterans who have been camping in France ever since September that it is possible to find very pleasant company in the larger cities further south. Paris is forbidden to American soldiers and officers alike for the reason that everybody wanted to swarm there, so it may be that I may not be able to go there for some time. But other places are spoken of as being fine cities to spend furloughs in, Nice in particular, so I will not be at a loss for somewhere to go when the opportunity presents itself. I have a notion that it may be some time, however, before I get that opportunity. Each officer and soldier is supposed to get ten days' leave after each four months of foreign service, unless the exigencies of the service prevent.

I have a notion that such exigencies are likely to arise. If the Boches start that drive with which von Hindenburg is going to "end the war in three months," there won't be many furloughs for awhile, but we are hoping the drive starts, for the harder the Huns hammer the more of them the Allies will kill, which is what we came over to help do. The Germans may be able to make dents here and there by smashing, but they will never be able to break through. The Russian collapse may prolong the thing for some time but there can be but one end. What I am afraid of is that the Germans will not drive on the Western front; but I am encouraged to hope that they will by the fashion in which they have always pursued the offensive.

I am glad that you feel about me as you say you do in your letter written on my birthday, and that you are not making the great mistake of worrying. If I do not come back, why then "that will be too bad," as they say in the army, but there might be a great many things worse. Any soldier that comes into unfortunate collision with a German bullet or other weapon is "out of luck," in army phraseology, but there are lots worse ways of being out of luck. And if the unlucky individual happens to be an



officer, the commentor always adds the phrase, "but it means promotion for somebody."

Speaking of war corresponding, as I was awhile ago, I intended to remark that the story on "The First Raid" in the *Saturday Evening Post* for December 29, 1917, amazes me by the frankness with which the statement of so much of the facts was permitted by the censor. There was more to tell, but I never expected to see so much in print. If you have not read that story get it and read it. The French say that the barrage put down by the Boches that night was the heaviest in any raid in the whole war. It succeeded in making every American soldier mad clean through.

You needn't worry about my needing any fire these days for we have had more fuel lately, and have been able to keep comfortable. The really bitter weather has been over for some time. It is the wet that will bother us for a time now, and then it will be the heat, for you know life's just one damn thing after another.

Love to all the folks, and particularly Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.

The removal of the Second Battalion from St. Ciergues meant the reunion of the entire 168th Regiment. At Baccarat in the Lorraine sector, it was reviewed by General Segonne. Then it moved on to Pexonne where regimental headquarters were established. The Second Battalion headquarters were at Badonviller, a town of about two thousand inhabitants, 55 kilometers or about 33 miles southeast of Nancy, and this was the point from which the regiment went into the trenches about a mile distant from it. Badonviller was the ruined town described by Mills in the first letter in this chapter. It remained the centre of activity for his unit during the regiment's service in Lorraine. Baccarat became the



headquarters of the Rainbow Division. It is a comparatively large place and the officers of the 168th when on leave frequently visited it. It is about fifteen miles from Badonviller.

This latter place, of which Mills was to see much and in which he had so many experiences, was one of the first towns in Lorraine to be ravaged by the Germans. The souvenir book which he sent home later contains photo-engravings of the ruined public buildings and the devastated streets. Inhabitants were massacred, including the wife of M. Benoit, the Maire, on August 12, 1914; the wounded were butchered and civil and military prisoners were brutally treated. Everything portable that the invaders could lay their hands on, they stole and carried off. Bavarian troops were the authors of these outrages.

When despatched to the front at this point, the officers of the 168th were told that they were to have only a ten-day training period. Their service there actually lasted a hundred and ten days. They were told also that it was a very quiet front. They entered the trenches for the first time on February 22, and were grouped, man for man, with French units which had experience in the game. The method used in occupying the trenches was to place one battalion in the line, one in reserve and one in support. The one in line was at Badonviller, the one in support at Pexonne and Camp Ker-Avor and the one in reserve at Neufmaisons. They were changed about every eight days. For more than a week the sector continued quiet. The Iowans held the line and went out raiding in No-Man's-Land with their French comrades; gradually they became accustomed to the situation and alert in response to its needs. Then, on March 5, came a terrible bombardment by the German guns and a savage raid, no doubt the one alluded to by Mills in the letters already given. The Germans gained nothing by the effort. They lost



instead of taking prisoners. But Captain Harry C. McHenry of Company B and eighteen men were killed. The first crosses over the Iowan troops went up in a little cemetery near Baccarat.

This is not a history of the 168th Regiment, a glorious tale in itself, and told at length by Chaplain Winfred E. Robb in his memorial book, *The Price of Our Heritage*; in these pages, the experiences of Mills are the matter in interest and, in the main, they are best recited in his own picturesque letters in which he unfolds the soldier's life from day to day. The next of these was evidently written very near the battle line, on the outskirts of Badonviller:

March 17, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: I am ensconced in an abandoned gun pit—this ground has been fought all over two or three times already—on the sunny side of a hill somewhere in that part of France you should by this time be reasonably able to guess at, a France which is to-day really sunny. It is a wonderful day, with a clear blue sky out of which a warm sun and one of those shadowy, ghost-like crescent moons are both shining at the same time. The fields are all celebrating St. Patrick's Day, for they have on their brilliant spring dress. And if this weather continues it won't be long before the trees are green, too. The corner of the gun pit makes an excellent armchair, in which I have made a cushion with my raincoat. I am leaning back luxuriating in the pleasant warmth, one of the cigars you sent me stuck in my teeth, my writing pad on my knee, the picture of solid comfort. Sol. Rubel says he does not believe anybody else can be as contented at anything, any way, as I am at writing.

I have drawn a peaceful, idyllic picture of my present location on the map of France. To complete it: I am writing to the music of *beaucoup de canon*, to phrase it



Frenchily. Many batteries of our heavy artillery are located in the woods around the town where we are now in reserve, and they are engaged in a lazy sort of duel with the Boche artillery. It seems highly incongruous for the atmosphere of this ideal day to be smashed so by the roar of mighty cannon. Our guns tear loose, and the concussion they make jars the ground; then you hear away off to the north a muffled roar and in a minute or so there comes a flock of Hun "nailkegs" shrieking through the air and bursts with another jar about half a mile or so away from me.

What effect our fire has on the other side of the line I cannot say; but the Boche fire on our batteries is wholly at random and futile. Their aviators keep coming around overhead trying to spot our batteries, but our anti-aircraft guns keep them at such a great height their reconnaissance cannot be worth much. Even now a flying Dutchman is highballing it back home through the air lanes with little white spots, like fleecy balls of cotton, breaking out all around him where our shrapnel is bursting. The shells burst so close to the planes that you wonder how they escape, yet I have seen only one airman who, I was reasonably sure, was shot out of the heavens. This one is flying so high that his machine is scarcely discernible by the naked eye save where the sunlight shimmers on its wings and makes them gleam like those of a dragon-fly. All of this no doubt seems highly exciting to you, but is so much a matter of course to us that nobody stops to pay any attention either to the artillery fire or the plane shooting unless a shell happens to drop unusually close, or a flyer takes a chance and comes low. As to the aviation end of the game, the French don't seem to care how much the Boche cruise around high up most of the time, but when for any reason we don't want them prying into our business a whole flock of Allied planes appears on the scene,



and you don't see anything of the Dutch until our eagles depart. I guess the Allied supremacy of the air is real; their supremacy in artillery is beyond question. As for the Germans ever being able to drive very deep anywhere in these parts, they simply could not do it. Nothing would please us more than for them to try.

I might write you at length concerning more of my experiences up front, some of which you have read of already in my letter to Mr. Luby, but I am in a mood for rereading and answering the three batches of letters I have received recently, one of them reaching me while I was up on the line. . . .

Many thanks for all the clippings; I enjoyed them immensely. It was too bad about Lieutenant Scott McCormick's death in that hand grenade accident. He was in my company at Plattsburg, and was in another company of the 168th where I saw a good deal of him. He was one of the best friends I had in the regiment. The cause of the accident will never be known. Grenades are tricky things.

In reference to the coal and food shortages concerning which you have written me and sent clippings I incline to the belief that Kultur will be found back of most of them, if the investigations only go deep enough. The long reach of German intrigue is a more marvelous thing to me than the power of German arms.

Your Hylan clippings have kept me right up with the New York City situation. Curiously enough I had, from this distance, come to the conclusion that Hylan was trying to ape Gaynor, and had so expressed myself in a letter to Al Pierce [*The Evening Sun's* City Hall reporter], before receiving your clippings charging the new Mayor with such emulation.

Well, it's nearly supper time so I had better stop. The artillery party is still going on, but Fritz didn't raise his



sights any so I didn't have to duck out of my armchair. There is a French plane cruising overhead now and no Boche in sight.

Much love to Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.

Lieutenant Scott McCormick, who was in Company K of the 168th, died on January 17, 1918, as the result of the accidental explosion of a hand grenade. The sad mishap occurred at the officers' training school at Gondrecourt, to which he had been sent. Lieutenant Rubel of Mills's company was also at the school and was the first to reach McCormick's side. It was he who wrote to McCormick's mother, Mrs. Oscar Gareissen of New York, giving her the details of the tragedy. She was engaged in reading a letter from her son when the official notification of his death was delivered to her. Lieutenant Rubel's letter led to an acquaintance between Mrs. Gareissen and his mother. Rubel was killed almost at the same moment as Mills and their common grief became a bond of sympathy and regard among the three bereft mothers. Mrs. Gareissen went to France soon after her son's death to work for the soldiers. The kindly efforts which she made later in Mrs. Mills's behalf will be told in due course.

March 19, 1918.

DEAR DAD: The U. S. N. A. collar insignia and one of the boxes of cigars came to-day, and both were most welcome. I am acknowledging their receipt at once because I am not sure that I will have any opportunity to mail letters for the next ten days. This is the last day for mailing letters before we start out on a hike of a hundred miles or so back to our training area where we will then be for some time. We came up by train, but we will march back, largely because the railroads are needed for present military purposes, I think. I do not apprehend the walk



at all, for you know I am pretty good at that, and besides I'd just as soon be doing that as anything else. It is all work, and the walk will do as much as anything I can think of to harden us for future service. If the weather only continues as at present, cool but not too cold, with the roads splendid underfoot, we should not complain.

By the way, I don't believe I have taken occasion to comment on the wonderful roads of France. They are graded to perfection, and are built somehow so as to withstand the suction of automobile tires much better than our roads back home. They seem to be a sort of macadam, but there is a fine, close-packing white earth of some sort mixed in with the crushed rock. The way these roads stand up under the terrific military auto-train traffic is a marvel; I hate to think what such use would make of our American good roads. The amount of repair work you see going on is very slight. These French people have a great way of setting out a single row of trees on either side of each road, which not only adds to the beauty of the landscape but renders travel along the highways, as they run largely through endless fields, much easier at night. You can keep to the road by watching the trees against the sky, even on the darkest nights.

I am enclosing some cards which will give you an idea of the sort of country we are now located in, a part of the section crushed by the iron heel of frightfulness. The more I see what the Germans have done over here, the more I long to kill some of them.

At the house where we officers are messing now there is a baby that was left with the daughter of the family by the Boches as a souvenir of their invasion. The father and brother of the family are in the army. Battered walls are the rule everywhere, but the fields between are kept green.

To-night, as most of to-day has been, is as calm and



peaceful as if there were no war anywhere on the face of the earth, but at any minute the scores of big guns in the immediate vicinity may let loose with a roar almost strong enough to lift me right out of my chair. We are within possible but not probable artillery range. We will move back to where we will not hear the sound of firing for a long time, so don't be apprehensive if there are no letters from me for a couple of weeks. While you are not hearing from me I will not be getting any mail, either.

I am sending you also a little French calendar book, similar to the one which you sent me, and which I was mighty glad to carry in my pocketbook. Much love to Mother and yourself, and regards to our friends.

QUINCY.

The regiment was relieved on March 22 and marched to the rear. Part of it went to Jeansmesnil; Quincy's battalion was sent to the rest camp of Ker-Avor, about five kilometres from Neufmaisons and three from Pexonne; about five from Badonviller. The rest from battle proved to be brief. Mills, however, took advantage of it to send home several letters:

March 26, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: The clipping you sent me regarding a prospective raise in officers' pay is interesting, but it strikes me that there are more important things to be done first. Personally, I do not feel there is so much need for raising officers' salaries; I would prefer for the Government to see to it that we are not stung in purchasing uniforms and other equipment. As compared with officers in other armies, we are already munificently paid; it is a fact that unless the British officer has independent means he cannot afford to associate with American officers, simply because he hasn't the money. On the other hand, it is true that



those who stay at home should be willing to pay almost any price to those who actually go out and bear the brunt of the war, enlisted men and officers alike.

All things considered, however, I don't believe that the highly paid soldier is necessarily the best soldier; in fact, the very opposite may easily be the case. I believe that the officers and private soldiers of the United States are paid too much already. The surplus which both spend over what is required for necessities—and the Government could supply everything required at a slight additional expenditure—is absolutely wasted. And this is no time for waste. I really think that while I do enjoy spending the surplus that I have I would be a better soldier for not having it to spend. The idea of high pay for soldiers is a direct outgrowth of the American misconception of freedom for self-indulgence instead of self-sacrifice.

Pershing's condemnation of the hypocrites back home for wailing about the moral state of the American soldier is great stuff. I think that I have dwelt sufficiently in a previous letter on the remarkable cleanness of this army. It is so rarely that a soldier abuses the privilege of drinking light wine and beer, which is accorded him, as to be exceptional. And if the men could buy plenty of candy at United States prices I believe that their purchase of beer and wine would be cut down fully fifty per cent. If those "holier than thou" critics would get together and *do* something by organizing candy canteens for every place where American troops are quartered over here, they would be performing a real service for the United States and its soldiers. I hope that you can have this excerpt about the "candy canteen" idea put into print. Such an innovation would fill a need as great as any tobacco fund is now filling.

But I suppose you are wanting to hear more about my experiences up front. Well, while speaking of bombard-



ments I don't believe I told you what a beautiful sight a night bombardment is. We "put on a show" one morning at 4:30 when the light was just beginning to appear in the east. I stood in the doorway of battalion headquarters and watched the flash of our great guns back on the horizon. It was like the continuous flash of distant lightning playing in a gigantic half-circle behind our line. The flare from each cannon would light the sky half way to the zenith. And there was plenty of thunder to accompany the display of light, too, I assure you.

The men's letters have been interesting since their experience in the trenches. "Believe me," wrote one, "those posts supporting the barbed wire all wore German helmets and did squads east and squads west all night long every night. You needn't tell me those posts don't move, for I've seen 'em." "I shot six Germans sneaking up on me one night," confessed another, "and when daylight came they were all the same stump." "Those damn posts play leap-frog all night long," declared another. "When we got tired," asserted one, "we used to ride the rats around." One wag asserted that "rats would halt you and refuse to let you pass after dark unless you gave the countersign." The men were equally jocular under fire. When a shell let go uncomfortably close I have heard one sing out to another: "Well, what do you think of the war *now*, Bill?" It was nothing unusual to hear a group sing out in unison in answer to a close shell-burst a long-drawn-out derisive "Well! Well!"

This is in accord with the spirit of the poilus, one of whom when a good unhealthy sized piece of shrapnel landed with a wicked spat at his feet removed his helmet with a flourish, bowed effusively, ejaculated, "Merci, beaucoup," replaced his helmet and went on about his business. While the big show was going on our men got so eager to "see Fritz get shot all to hell" that they risked



the German fire to crawl up on the parapets where they could get a good view. One of them could not restrain himself when he saw a Fritz go sailing up into the air along with logs, trees (roots and all) and gun wheels; he just got right up and danced on the parapet yelling: "Look at that damn Dutchman! he thinks he is flying but he ain't." This enthusiast had to be yanked down to safety by his coat-tails.

Right in the middle of that big bombardment who do you suppose walked into the battalion headquarters but three American war correspondents: Lincoln Eyre of the *New York World*, with whom I covered City Hall for several years; C. C. Lyon of the *United Press*, with whom I covered the National Conventions in 1912 and Herbert Corey, free lance. They had their first experience under fire with us. I got so busy talking old times with Eyre and Lyon that I forgot about being "skeered" part of the time. The bombardment lasted six hours, as I told you before, I believe. These three newspaper men make their headquarters in Paris, and they assure me that when I get down there on furlough I won't miss anything. And I guess I will go to Paris when I get my furlough, as the Major tells me it can be arranged.

Perhaps you will see something written by one or each of these men about the little affair they witnessed with us. Look out for something of the sort. I am afraid that whatever they write they will not give due credit to the real heroes of the day, the cooks of G Company, who "stood to" around the rolling kitchen during the firing and had hot "slum" and boiling coffee ready when the guns began to slow up. Before the shooting stopped they were helping the carriers get the hot food out to the boys in the trenches, and they had to drop flat in the mud to dodge shells more than once. Buckets built on the thermos-bottle idea are provided for the transportation of



the food a mile or so to the trenches, and the men of our company always got theirs piping hot. Our small dog really suffered more than any other member of our company in the trip to the line. He nearly barked himself to death at the German shells that burst close, and is no longer a butterball, is quite thin in fact, and badly in need of his rest billet.

I am glad you like the medal I sent you. Here's where I close this, as I have an unexpected opportunity to mail it. I hope you are having as glorious a Palm Sunday as this one which is blessing France and us.

Captain Springer sends regards. Love to Dad and yourself, and regards to the friends. QUINCY.

Mr. Corey wrote an article of 3500 to 4000 words which appeared in the New York *Globe* of April 16 describing this visit to Badonviller. He dated it, "With the American Army in the Lorraine Sector, March 10." This, then, was the time of his call at the headquarters of the 168th, although Mills tells of it more than two weeks later. Mr. Corey's account of the men, their temper, their courage, their light-hearted demeanor as well as of their peril and suffering corresponds closely with Mills's statements in various letters. In the article, this paragraph occurred:

Inside the pink house, the officer in command received us with a grin. The humorous feature of the situation lay in the fact that we had come up the railroad, every inch of the line being under close observation by the Boche. His aid said we had come right through the middle of it. His aid, by the way, used to do City Hall in New York for an evening paper and sent his best wishes to Bill Gramer of the New York *Globe*. He said that Bill was a good old scout. Bill's merits did not appeal to us as worthy of discussion at the moment.

"They're not wasting shell on a few men on the railroad," said the officer in command, "they need all those shells to lam our batteries with!"



This brought a letter from Mr. Gramer to Mills in which he said:

I recognize the leading actor in the unnamed *dramatis personæ*. It made me feel glad to hear from you although indirectly, and inspired me with even more confidence than I had in our sterling defenders who, face to face with death, can maintain a sense of humor and pause to make inquiry about a friend.

Gradually the public is beginning to grasp the gravity of the situation, and you men in the trenches may rest assured that you are receiving full support from over here.

Mills's letters went on:

March 27, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: I am sending, or am going to send as soon as I have the opportunity, a very small package your way. Its principal content will be a pin in the shape of the Cross of Lorraine which I think you will like. The two Joan of Arc badges I also inclose are of no intrinsic value, but I send them as souvenirs of the town up on the first line where we were stationed. I found them in one of the abandoned houses there along with a bunch of stamps like that at the top of the next card, all bearing the bust of The Maid.

You can't go anywhere in this part of France without finding all sorts of similar mementoes of the immortal Joan. These two cards will afford you some further idea of the appearance of the ruined towns I've been through recently.

We have been hiking over more beautiful country in what is now really the pleasant land of France. The Germans seem to be showing more activity, and we all hope it means their drive.

QUINCY.

The Cross of Lorraine pin which Mills sent to his mother is of gold. The beautiful design shows a double cross with



a thistle across it. The thistle represents the union of the families of Guise and Stuart by the marriage of Mary of Guise to James V of Scotland.

March 31, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Although we are out of cannon sound now, the favorite song among the men is, "Gee! but ain't America a grand old place!" There is nothing incongruous about this as there was in the sound of the voices of our company quartette rising in one of their favorite airs, "See that big moon shining up above—There's no time like this for making love," one night while the guns were banging away around the shell-battered town [Badonviller] in which we remained in support after a period in the trenches. The music of our quartette sounded as strange in that environment as had the voices of the birds in the orchard around battalion headquarters during the big bombardment I wrote you of. It seemed to me that the concussion from the artillery would have been enough to awe the birds into silence, but they ignored it utterly; and the only way artillery can effect the spirits of the American soldier is by a direct hit.

However, the music that the shells contribute makes a lasting impression and it doesn't take you very long to tell the different keys in which the various sizes sing. For instance, the Boche 77 comes over with a whizz and a bang that has earned for projectiles of that calibre the name of "whizz-bangs." The 105's and 155's, especially the shrapnel variety, emit a long drawn out squealing whine that trails off interminally before the explosion, this peculiar noise having earned them the name of "flying pigs" from the American soldier, this appellation being original to the A. E. F. so far as I know. But the really appalling sound is when a 210 or a 250 invades the atmosphere in your immediate vicinity; it sounds like a whole



frame house coming rushing through the air—a good big frame house too—and when that shell lets go, the hole it makes is big enough to dump a small building into.

It is *some* relief not to have those noises pounding at your nerves all the time and to be listening for the next one to drop when there's nothing happening. If it were not for the comic relief you get up front you would go nutty, and when the decorations are passed around one ought to be handed out to the well known and much maligned army mule for—in addition to keeping both our stomachs and guns supplied with food—affording no end of this low comedy stuff. One morning when intense silence was desired within our lines, there arose in the street a clatter that sounded like a whole herd of mules stampeding, and after it died down some ten minutes later a driver lifted up his voice in an aggrieved complaint: “Now ye goddam fool mule ye didn't git hurt after all, did ye?” The said “goddam” mule had raised all the rum-pus about crossing a drain not more than two inches deep.

One morning I got another good laugh when old Bill Hobbs, one of our veteran kitchen mechanics, standing arms akimbo, his big spoon in one hand, propounded to our chief muleteer, the inquiry: “Well, Ben, where's them soldiers goin' to drink this mawnin'?” The while, “them soldiers”—our ration wagon team—regarded him, one over each of Ben's shoulders, with that gaze of infinite wisdom common to mules. Bill having used their trough as a wash basin for his greasy pans, “them soldiers” had to be led elsewhere to drink that “mawnin'.” Unconsciously though, Bill had done “them soldiers” the greatest honor in his power by accepting them on an exactly even footing with himself in the conflict against Kultur. If the other soldiers do their “bits” as well as the mules they will have done something to brag about when they get through.



One souvenir of the trenches I have thus far escaped, the "cooties," whom the men refer to rather proudly in their letters home as their "little pets." In fact, there has been less trouble with vermin than I had apprehended. But just to be on the safe side I wear a cute little "cootie necklace" with lavallieres (spelled right?) fore and aft, which are well soaked with a very penetrating aromatic cedar oil that smells much like the sort of stuff we use to charm the mosquitos away, back home. I certainly hope I don't get bugs in that fine sleeping bag Bill Gramer donated to me; it would be too bad to have to burn it.

The news of the long range guns with which the Germans have been shelling Paris has produced a very different effect, so far as the A. E. F. is concerned, from that of extreme awe, which Kultur evidently hoped for. "Them guns shoot too far; they can't hit us," was the first comment I heard from the men, who now swear that they saw the shells going overhead, and that each one carried a German band playing full blast. This latest Boche stunt is entirely in keeping with their grandstand playing throughout, but nobody seems to consider it of any military significance. From all that I can learn the cost of such a bombardment must about equal the damage wrought by it. It is a matter of considerably more concern that the Germans have been dropping Russian shells over on the Western front, indicating that they are putting the captured Russian artillery into use. But that the addition of these guns will make any serious difference is not likely.

In one respect, particularly, the trip to the trenches has been extremely beneficial to the men. Before they went up they were inclined to be entirely too cocky, and to hold the French in considerable contempt because they hadn't "licked the Dutch" already. They still refer to the poilus as "froggies," but it is noticeable that having



soldiered with them they view them with a large amount of respect. The poilus think the Americans incline to rashness in always picking on the Boche and keeping him stirred up continually, but that is a good trait, provided our men don't undertake to walk right on over the German trenches into Berlin—and I do not now believe that they will make this mistake as the Canadians and Australians did. There isn't any doubt about whom "No-Man's-Land" belongs to along the American sectors, however. The Germans simply got out of the contested ground on our front and stayed out of it at night while American patrols roamed all over it. Isolated snipers were about the only things to worry us, that and the dropping of occasional shells. As I have written you before, there is hardly ever a batch of the men's letters to be censored without a smile in at least one of them. Nearly all of them insist on spelling Boche "Bosche" or sometimes just plain "Bosh"—and I must admit that there is a certain fitness in the characterization.

This reminds me to remark to you on an American eccentricity, indulgence—call it what you like—which has made a great impression here in France, causing one very nice little mademoiselle at whose home we had our officers' mess at one of our stops to inquire: "Quel est le goddam? Le soldat d'Amerique dit toujours, goddam." She was considerably mystified and somewhat embarrassed by the shout of laughter which greeted the translation of her query. As for communicating with the French, I go armed with my trusty pocket dictionary always, but don't often have to resort to it in the essential intercourse with the natives regarding food, drink and lodging. I can usually manage to make myself understood if I ask a question, but I have a devil of a time sometimes comprehending the answer, which always sounds so very different from the way it looks when written out.



Here are some Easter violets. Some of these days I will tell you a very interesting story concerning the picking of them, but for the present I will have to censor that out of my correspondence myself.

It has been a wonderful Easter Sunday, as calm and peaceful as if there were no war anywhere in the world. However, I risk this gentle Easter wish: "Goddam the Germans—toujours Goddam!"

Love to Dad and yourself and regards to all the friends.

QUINCY.

Whatever may have been the first intention in withdrawing the regiment to the rear, the respite lasted actually only ten days. The German drive against the British at Amiens made it necessary to collect a large force of veteran French troops from the trenches to send to their relief. In turn, American troops, including the 168th, were ordered to take their place. The regiment marched back to Badonviller and occupied the right of the divisional front. It remained there, in one or other of the three defensive positions, until June 18, making, altogether, a hundred and ten days of service on the Lorraine front. From one of the support stations hereabouts Mills wrote his next letters:

April 6, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Glad to get a bunch of mail from you to-day, and learn that you folks at home are well and happy. You must bear with me if news is fragmentary and somewhat far between, for I am so eternally busy that I haven't either time, or energy for writing when I get the time. I just naturally hit the blankets and snore, snore, snore.

We are not actually in the biggest of the big doings this spring, but we are playing a most important part and



playing it extremely well, for as the Iowa men all say proudly, "we shore have the Dutch bothered," which is, I think, absolutely true. The Boches have not attempted to patrol the front of our positions at all so far as we can ascertain, and we *know* the holy terror in which they stand of the American artillery.

Some of these days I will have some very interesting things to write you, but for the present my communication will have to be brief and to the point: That I am well, and as happy as a man can be when he hasn't time to think whether he is or not.

Much love for Dad and yourself, and regards to all the friends.

QUINCY.

April 9, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: This is just a brief line to let you know that I am O.K., and that a letter telling more in detail of my recent experience will follow this as soon as I can get to it. My last note to you was written in a dugout some several feet underground up on the front line in Lorraine. I had a platoon in combat position this time; and so you can imagine that I have had too much on my mind to leave much time for letters recently.

I have pretty much lost track of time in the immediate past and of the events occurring therein—the normal ones, I mean—so I am not sure that I got notes off to you regularly. But I wrote you as often as I could. And since coming out I have been specializing in sleep whenever I have not been attending to company matters. Somehow or other, there has been another jam in the delivery of incoming mail and I am . . .

Right here, at this point in the sentence, in walked an orderly and presented me with a fistful of mail, but there were only four letters from you, and that leaves me still shy fully half of what you must have mailed me during



February. The third box of cigars you mailed me and Bill Gramer's package have not showed up yet, and they would hit just about right, too. Also the candy will touch the same spot when it arrives, which will be some time.

Well, here's where I put in a few more hours on that sleeping contract.

Much love to Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.

Further souvenirs of this first experience in the trenches were found in Mills's trunks when they were delivered to his parents. Between the pages of his notebook used later at the Gondrecourt training school for officers, were sixteen rough slips of paper torn, some from a pad, some from a memorandum book, and containing in pencil writing the copies he had kept of reports, requisitions and communications which he had sent to his company commander and other officers, and one or two replies received from them. Nothing better illustrates the matter-of-fact, or routine side of life in the trenches than these. They are all numbered. This is the first:

FROM LT. MILLS AT G. C. 12, 4/3/18—4:15 P.M. BY PVT. SKINNER.

LT. YOUNKIN: Relief completed as per instructions. We drew 5 shrapnel in Boyou Central half way out; and about 15 in the communicating trench between G. C. 11 and G. C. 12, one being a direct hit in the trench behind us. I believe that as long as the German sausage balloon is kept up over to our left it can keep track of chow details and all other parties passing into this sector by day. There are three points at which the trench between 11 and 12 demands immediate work (at one place it is necessary to climb almost on the parapet to pass) and it would take 15 men three nights to put this G. C. in proper shape. *Please get this work done for me.*

MILLS.

To this, Lt. Younkin, who had succeeded Capt. Steller in command of Co. G after the latter had been wounded



in the head in an extraordinary manner and partially blinded, replied:

LT. MILLS: I will have the "Boche sausage" removed to-morrow.

Will try to get you a working party for to-morrow night; in meantime, do what work you can on trenches and parapet. The men relieved are in no condition to work to-night.

YOUNKIN.

Mills answered:

At G. C. 12—4/4/18

By PVT. LINDQUIST

To LT. YOUNKIN: Thanks for having the sausage taken down this A.M. I hereby requisition at Lt. Nelson's direction, 50 duckboards for use in the G.C. and the entrance to the C.T. now being repaired, C.T. 311, I think it is.

The working detail I asked for yesterday should be from one of the reserve companies in town—from the engineers, if possible. Lindquist on his early trip to-day noticed a steady light evidently shining from the door of a dugout in G.C. 13, which should be covered.

MILLS.

In order, the other communications were:

At G. C. 12, 4/3/18—5 P.M.

By PVT. SKINNER.

ORDNANCE OFFICER, 2nd Btn.:—Give this detail 1500 rounds of automatic rifle ammunition for Lt. Mills at G.C. 12.

Q. S. MILLS,  
2nd Lt. G Co. 168th Inf.

G. C. 12, 4/3/18—5 P.M.

By PVT. SKINNER.

LT. GUNDERSON: Please furnish runner with a detail to carry out 1500 rounds of Chauchat ammunition. Also give him one automatic pistol and three clips for my first sergeant and two pistol holsters. Sorry to bother you but we need the stuff to-night.

Q. S. MILLS,  
2nd Lt., Co. G 168th Inf.



# The Deadly "Sossidge"

361

## INTELLIGENCE REPORT

G. C. 12, 4/4/18—3:45 A.M.

By PVT. SKINNER.

Night very quiet. Half a dozen shrapnel dropped in vicinity of G.C. at 7:30 P.M. last evening. No effect.

QUINCY S. MILLS,  
2nd Lt., G Co. 168th Inf.

G. C. 12, 4/4/18—2:30 P.M.

By PVT. LINDQUIST.

To LT. YOUNKIN: Send also 50 sandbags. And most important of all, send a bottle of oil for the automatic rifles. A bottle of oil was sent to each P. C. when the platoons came out, but we can find none here. Lt. Pearsall may have taken it back to the support by mistake. If so, please ask him to return it.

Also see to it that that damned "sossidge" is hauled down again. It's spotting "dornicks" for Fritz on the C. T. between 11 and 12, this afternoon. One of them just burst close to our Post No. 1, touching up the parapet a bit.

MILLS.

## MORNING REPORT

By PVT. LINDQUIST.

C 12, 4/4/18.

On duty this day:

Commissioned Officers	2
Non-Coms. Sergeants	2
Corporals	5
Privates	<u>25</u>
Total	34

## AMMUNITION REPORT

Add 3400 rounds Chauchat ammunition

" 320 " auto-pistol, cal. .45

" 100 F I grenades

QUINCY S. MILLS,  
2nd Lt., Co. G, 168th Inf.



G. C. 12, 4/5/18—3:45 A.M.

BY PVT. SKINNER.

TO LT. YOUNKIN: (1) There are two dugouts now in use. One more could be fitted for use if drained of the water now knee deep in it. None of the three is more than ten feet underground. Only the P. C. dugout has two entrances. There is a fourth and older large dugout, but which could not be rendered safe without a great deal of work.

(2) The P. C. dugout has been fitted recently with gas blankets, which are in good condition; there is a blanket on the entrance, also, of the dugout used for the men. There should be a blanket also on the dugout now knee-deep in water, which we used for shelter, in case of heavy bombardment.

(3) The trenches are in poor condition. They require drainage and revetment throughout, if they are to be kept serviceable. At least 100 duckboards and several hundred sandbags would be required to put these trenches in first-class shape.

(4) There is a great deal of wire both in front of and behind this G. C., but it is old and requires repair. With the exception of one point, the wire furnishes fairly adequate protection. There should be some new wire and new posts, but no great amount is needed.

QUINCY S. MILLS,

2nd Lt., G Co., 168th Inf.

## MORNING REPORT

G. C. 12, 4/5/18—3:45 A.M.

On duty this day:

Officers	1
Non-Coms Sergeants	2
Corporals	5
Privates	<u>25</u>
	33

## AMMUNITION REPORT

On hand:

Chauchat Ammunition	6000 rounds
30-30	5000 "



Auto-Pistol, Cal. .45	320 rounds
Grenades F 1	233 "
" O F	25 "
" French	180 "
Chauchat clips	75
Ammunition expended since taking over G.C. 12	
at 4 P.M., April 3rd: None.	

## WORK REPORT

All spare time of men devoted to drainage, sanitation and renovation of ammunition dump.

Q. S. MILLS,  
2nd Lt., G Co., 168th Inf.

G. C. 12, 4/5/18.

By PVT. LINDQUIST.

LT. YOUNKIN: Please have a spool of barbed wire sent out this afternoon.

MILLS.

G. C. 12, 4/6/18—3:45 A.M.

PVT. LINDQUIST.

Wire patrol of 4 men at dusk, 4/5/18, mended old breaks in wire front of post No. 5; time, 30 min. Enemy flares frequent. Enemy artillery 4/5 shelled G.T. between G.C. 11 and 12 for 30 min, at 2:30 P.M. 25 shells; several shells fell around this G.C. An enemy outpost discovered by Sergeant (name illegible) some 1500 yards distant in woods just behind old enemy; attempted sniping on this post proved ineffective because of distance.

Ammunition report, no change; no ammunition fired in past 24 hours.

Morning report: No. of men on duty this day:

Officers	1
Non-Coms. Sergts.	2
Corporals	5
Privates	<u>25</u>
Total	33

QUINCY S. MILLS,  
2nd Lt., G Co., 168th Inf.



G. C. 12, 4/7/18—3:45 A.M.

By PVT. SKINNER.

To LT. YOUNKIN: Patrols from this post yesterday examined an old trench running through No-Man's-Land to the German line; with the resulting conclusion that this sap is the working base of German snipers who have been firing on the G.C.'s posts frequently of late. From this sap command can be had of the principal street in Badonviller, which I understand has been fired into recently. American snipers, if sent out systematically, could control this sap and use it as effectively as it is now being used by the enemy.

The same enemy trench mortar reported previously from this G.C. as being located in a wooded hollow opposite was active late yesterday, throwing some 30 shells at the Alabamans from around 5 P.M.

Worked twenty men most of the afternoon draining trenches and rearranging duckboards.

Ordinance property to be turned over to relieving force: 50,000 rounds Chauchat ammunition; 200 rounds auto-pistol am., 180 French citron grenades; 10 Very pistol barrage shells; one Very pistol advance barrage shell; 8 advance barrage trench shells; 5 tromblon star shells; 13 tromblon flare lights; 11 Very pistol gas shells; 4 Very flare lights; 30 barrage rockets; 23 gas rockets; 12 assorted rocket, flare and caterpillar lights.

No ammunition expended in 24 hours past.

QUINCY S. MILLS,  
2nd Lt., Co. G, 168th Inf.

This souvenir of trench conditions was also found.

From G. C. 12. 4/5/18, Time 3:35 A.M.

By PVT. SKINNER.

To Y. M. C. A.: Please let bearer have what you can spare in Sweets, also Writing Paper and Envelopes.

QUINCY S. MILLS,  
2nd Lt. Co. G, 168 Inf.

A partially illegible penciled sheet, accompanying the others also illustrates a detail of army life in active service. It belongs to the St. Ciergues period, but may be given



here along with these other official memoranda. It shows that military precision is unrelenting even in presence of the enemy:

*To the Commanding Officer, 2nd Battalion, 168th Infantry:*

I. Will be inspection to-morrow, January 31, 1918, by the Division Inspector.

II. All buildings and rooms occupied by the troops must be scrubbed and thoroughly policed. The bed ticks will be arranged uniformly with a poncho underneath and a folded blanket covering. All surplus clothing must be hung up and arranged neatly around the walls. Shoes will be cleaned and arranged neatly near each man's bunk. Boots will be washed off and hung up on the walls.

III. Street will be policed and put in good condition. Kitchen will be policed and if necessary the floor will be scrubbed. Also the ground around the kitchen will be policed. Latrines will be placed in good sanitary condition.

IV. This preparational work must be completed before the troops go on to drill.

V. It would be advisable for the company commander to make an inspection to see that everything is in readiness for the Divisional Inspector, before he proceeds to the drill ground.

Additional Paragraph II. Mess tins will be cleaned and placed in a convenient place for the Inspector.

Evidently military housekeeping is meticulous to the point of old-maidishness. From the military succinctness of these documents an intimate and enlightening acquaintance with the fighting front may be derived. No less illuminating but very different in style is the letter in which Mills breezily records his experiences for the same period:

April 10, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Well, here we are back of the line in support again without any casualties yet in our company



after two hitches in the trenches. But I knock on wood, for, while our sector has been quiet in comparison with what is going on, on the British front, company G has played in luck.

Even in a quiet sector there are always shells, or "dornicks" as the men refer to them jocosely, dropping and machine guns playing, so if a man is careless it's more than likely to be his funeral. My doctrine of keeping my head down is followed religiously by this outfit; every man is determined not to take any chances where he hasn't a chance of getting a Boche, and useless losses have been and will, I believe, continue to be obviated.

On this trip up I had a platoon in combat position on the line, and I simply cannot tell you how my respect for the enlisted men of this company, always high, was increased by being in the trenches with them. They are certainly soldier stuff of the very highest order ever put into uniform. It is a real privilege to serve with them.

Odd experiences are always coming to everyone all through life, but one of my oddest came to me while doing this trick on the line. You remember I wrote you that I was in command of the company for a time some months ago while most of the other officers were at school. Well, while in command it became necessary for me to appoint a sergeant, and I named the man I thought best fitted for the place, regardless of seniority. On the first round in the trenches my sergeant made good, and when I went in who should I have to run things for me but my own appointee. The way he worked for me (naturally) was a caution. We didn't have a hitch, and I have no doubt that in case of just a plain attempt at a raid—not an attack in force, of course—we would have smashed the Huns to a finish. This sergeant's name is Will Scott. He has three brothers of military age, and all are in the service. He says that his mother only wishes she had



four more sons to put in uniform. Scott was a junior corporal when I was sent to the company, and had the former policy of seniority in promotions been adhered to he would be a corporal still. The way he has proved up has had the very good effect of establishing a precedent for abolishing the seniority system in the company, and this is a step in the right direction.

I suppose you have noticed in the papers the account of Capt. Steller's misfortune. [The original commander of Company G.] He stepped out of his dugout while there was no shell firing going on in the immediate vicinity, and was struck on the head by some sort of missile that apparently dropped out of clear space. He was struck on top of the helmet, which kept the blow from killing him, but he has entirely lost the sight of the left eye, and is still in the hospital. I doubt if he will be returned to active duty. Lieut. Younkin has had charge of the company practically all of the time it has been up front, and has acquitted himself creditably. The captain's injury was a very strange incident. He was alone at the time, and says he heard nothing before he was struck. Some shells were going away over from both sides, and one theory was that a sliver falling from one of these in transit happened to hit him; either that or it was a sniper's bullet, but if the latter it seems he would have heard it. His injury is the most serious sustained by anyone in the company thus far.

So far as my stay in the front line was concerned, it was extremely quiet, but naturally the strain of being on the *qui vive* is sufficiently wearing to render rest necessary by the time a stint is over, even if nothing happens. What I minded most was the mud, and the floundering around over slippery duckboards making my rounds in darkness so black you couldn't see your hand before your face. My rubber hip boots kept my feet dry, but they sure did



pick me up and throw me down often enough. And after such strenuous exercise I never had any trouble rolling into my bunk down in the dugout and sleeping like a log.

On coming back from my first experience right in the line I am "bothered," as these Iowa lads put it, much less by the danger of such life than by its acute discomfort. Of course I did not have to stand attack and after I have put in some time in a more lively neighborhood I may revise my feelings.

I wasn't annoyed any by barbed wire posts and stumps creeping craftily upon me in the darkness this time, but maybe that will come later, too. I had some men who were always hearing Huns in the wire after nightfall, but we never found any of them.

The trench rats are all you have heard them represented as being. I got so that I could sleep O. K. with them capering over my face and person. They furnish diversion for the men on post, who rig up traps and catch them during the night hours that pass too slowly for them on watch. One of my runners swore he woke up one night to catch a rat in the act of putting on his boots and walking off in them, but I didn't see that. Some of the men on post declare that all trench rats are equipped with rubber boots—size 10's—and gas masks. You would be amazed at the amount of fun the fellows have in the trenches. And it is an odd thing that the gas hasn't killed off the rats all along the line. We were very fortunate in not getting a single shot of gas this time. I do not mind being equally fortunate all the time, for gas masks are very unpleasant things to wear. They make you feel that you can't get out and scrap if you have to; but then the other fellow has to wear his muzzle too, if he comes over while there is gas about, so it's as broad as it's long.

Will write you more on the trench subject another time.



We are now back in reserve, and are going further back in a day or two.

Much love to Dad and yourself,

QUINCY.

April 14, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Here are a couple of views of the first place [St. Ciergues] we were in after leaving the fort. Sorry I had to erase the name to comply with censorship regulations. This is the old inn I lived at [Hotel Fèvre], and the window with the shutter is the one from which I used to watch the water in the spillway from the lake. The other card shows a road along the lake, with our town on the other side.

This inn is the one where we got the wonderful pommes de terre and chaud chocolat. We haven't been able to get any food anywhere else in France to touch what was set before us there. We hope to return there later.

Are being blessed with wonderful spring weather now. The fruit trees are all bursting out in glorious bouquets all over the countryside. And I am blossoming out in my dress up duds for the first time since my arrival in France. Decided to make the concession to Mlle. Printemps, since she was smiling on us so. If there were only some pretty girls around this wouldn't be such a bad war at present, but the pretty girls aren't.

Much love to Dad and yourself,

QUINCY.

April 17, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: So you know at last what it feels like to cast your ballot! Well! Well! None of my ancestors ever had mothers old enough to vote. I can just see you and Mrs. — and Mrs. — chewing on your long black cigars as you put down the X marks opposite the candidates' names.

I am not at all surprised at the way you voted, or the



reasoning by which you were influenced. I am glad you have at last had the pleasure of voting; if we could only both vote for Irish conscription now, and then help enforce it, we would feel that we had done enough. I am sore clean through at the Irish for the part they have played or haven't played, in this war. The Irish are going to wake up some fine day to find out that they've got themselves into a position where nobody will have any sympathy for them.

I feel considerably better after having got this business off my mind, and will proceed to tell you, before I forget it, that bit of interesting news I promised regarding the violets I sent you about two weeks ago. I picked them just at the door of my dugout in the ruined city up on the Lorraine front [Badonviller], the dugout in question being situated under the remains of a shell-shattered chateau. I know you will value the violets more now. And I wish you could enjoy the beauties of the spring blossoms with me here in France; they never before seemed so beautiful to my eyes, the fruit trees bursting out like gigantic pink and white bouquets everywhere. As I passed along a road near here to-day I noticed a peach tree all in bloom although it had been blown over by a shell which had struck in its roots, as if it enraged Kultur to see anything so fair.

A matter which will interest you, I know, is in regard to my service in this regiment. All U. S. N. A. and U. S. R. officers serving in National Guard units have been asked to resign their training camp commissions and accept Guard commissions of the same grade. The reason assigned for this request is that all promotions must be made within the N. G. branch in N. G. units, and that officers holding commissions in other branches cannot be advanced in the Guard and will be shifted to other units unless they transfer to the N. G.



Promotion doesn't worry me. Having come this far with the organization I feel a reluctance not to see things through with it, particularly as the more of the men in the ranks I see the more I admire them. But if I am shifted to a drafted unit it need not surprise you, although I do not look for a change any time soon. And it may be that no changes will be made, as the changing would have to be so general. Personally, I think the distinction a very foolish one; it is all the U. S. army, and all commissions should be plain U. S. But the regular army is jealous of the U. S. insignia, and the National Guard is anxious to preserve the integrity of that branch.

Wonder where I'll turn up next—with a bunch of conscripts from the Golden Gate or from Dixie? For my part, I would like very much to see the sectional line obliterated altogether, and men from every State in every regiment. From the replacement troops we have just received, I gather there is something of the sort going on; if the same rate of change should continue, this could not be classified as an Iowa regiment, strictly speaking, very long. And how much better it would be for the United States Army to be really a National Army and not a combination of sectional armies. Of course the negro troops would have to be kept separate, but what has become of them anyway? I never hear of them; are they training, and where?

Any change in organizations for me I think will be extremely unlikely until after I go to one of the army schools. Unless events interfere with the regular sessions, I rather expect to go about the middle of May, a month from now. But we may all be so busy in a larger school that we won't get any special instruction for a while. The terms of these schools are from five to six weeks, so that will keep me going well into the summer. And I am making application for my regular leave of some ten days to come



along some of these times. It was due April 12, after four months' service on this side, but for the present all leaves are held up for both officers and men because the war business is just a little too pressing to admit of "permissions"—as the French call furloughs. I am going through the formality of asking for mine in the hope of thus keeping from losing it entirely.

You ask about whether you shall send packages of Sunday papers to me; I think not. The clippings I enjoy; the additional bulk of the Sunday issues would hardly justify themselves, I believe. All the gleanings you have sent me about Hylan I have read with much interest, amusement—and disgust. I have a premonition that it will not be necessary for me to lift the lid off the town when I return. I hope the City Hall is nailed down, and that Mitchel took care to take out burglar insurance on the golden statue of Civic Virtue atop the Municipal Building.

Much love to Dad and yourself—and kick the cats for me,  
QUINCY.

Exactly where the preceding letter was written it is not possible to say, but those which follow down to the end of the chapter were unquestionably written at Camp Ker-Avor, where the Battalion had a ten-day rest, and whose surrounding scenery is accurately described:

April 20, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: The forest pictured on this card is not where we are resting, though it is very suggestive of our present quarters. It would be a nice place a little later on, but the weather is still too cool and rainy for such a location to be entirely comfortable, especially underfoot.

Your solicitude regarding sending packages over here seems to have been relieved forcibly by the Government,



which has decided to prohibit the sending of parcels to soldiers, I see. I am not surprised. The package game has been abused greatly; so much stuff that would spoil before it got here has been sent; and there has been so much sent that wasn't worth the transportation.

In regard to your inquiry as to what sort of knitted goods to send, I repeat that gloves are the soldiers' greatest want in the winter. They never have enough, and often really suffer for want of covering for their hands. The wristlets do not answer. QUINCY.

April 23, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: I have been absorbing so much sleep the last few days that I am afraid I have let time go by when I should have been writing to you. It is amazing how much you can sleep over here, even in a dugout up on the front line.

I have just written a friend a letter of sympathy over the terrible plight he is in. He wrote me that he was doing something or other for a war board which is supposed to be accomplishing something or other and is actually providing soft jobs, I suppose, at Washington. He complained bitterly over the hardship of having to live in a city so overcrowded that he had to occupy a hotel room, or suite or someplace or other, with another similarly imposed upon chair warmer instead of by himself. I told him how sorry I was he had to feel so keenly the ruthless heel of Frightfulness, and that something would have to be done about such indignities being heaped on free-born American citizens. I also advised him that if he had once resided in a dugout some fifteen feet underground where there was always at least two inches of water on the floor he wouldn't be so choicy about his sleeping quarters. I suggested, too, that if more attention were paid to swelling the ranks of our army over here instead of those of the



safety zone army in the States, a great deal more would be accomplished toward licking the Huns. I do believe very firmly that there's too much waste of energy in commissions and boards which duplicate and reduplicate work, and even operate at cross purposes, thereby hampering the delivery of both men and supplies on this side of the Atlantic.

We are leading a very prosaic life now, back in a rest camp in the woods. The last sensation we had, and a very mild one at that, was when a Boche airman sailed over the last town I wrote you from and peppered machine gun bullets down on our streets while our batteries burst shrapnel around him. The most thrilling incident I have witnessed up at the front was something of the same sort that occurred one morning about 5 A.M. when a Boche flier fell into a trap laid for him by our artillery, which let him circle lower and lower until the gun layers had all the "dope" on him. Then all the batteries within range opened up on him at once, and he turned tail and headed for Germany "like a bat out of hell," as my sergeant very graphically described it.

Anti-aircraft shrapnel bursts with a peculiar detonation that seems to ring all around the heavens when it goes off anywhere near over your head, and the noise of the bombardment of this lone aviator was really awe-inspiring. He came scudding low right over our position, every wire even of his machine standing out in clear relief against the sky in the early morning light, angry bursts of black shell smoke popping out all around him. Each shell burst under the tail of his machine seemed to accelerate his speed homeward by about twenty miles an hour. He was surely going some when he passed over us, but he wasn't too busy with trying to get away to turn his machine gun on us and do his best to take some of us along with him if he had to be shot down. The bullets whined down into our trenches



close by but we got off untouched. So did he, although I don't see how he ever managed it. Altogether, his flight made the most sensational spectacle I have ever witnessed. Only the proper climax was lacking, the shooting down of the Hun machine. What a movie that episode would have made! Indeed, our everyday sights over here beat the movies, and even the Follies, all hollow. Too much excitement grows stale on anyone, though.

Back in the town we just moved out of I used to marvel at the manner in which the French urchins would play out in the streets, racing down the hill before my billet in the same sort of coaster wagons the kids delight so in, back in New York, and not pay the slightest attention to German shells shrieking past and bursting just over the hill on a road that the Fritzes were always touching up. This obliviousness to danger, particularly in view of the shell-shattered buildings all around them, struck me as being so remarkable in children as to be almost unbelievable. The manner in which civilians clung to the remains of their homes, even in the town we occupied up within a mile of the first line [Badonviller] never ceased to be a wonder to me. Among the inhabitants were two unusually pretty sisters, about sixteen and eighteen, who stuck it out through bombardment after bombardment. It was the strangest sight I ever saw to see these two girls come strolling down the street, daintily dressed, apparently wholly unappalled by the scene of desolation around them, paying no heed to the voice of war even when the big guns were talking loudly on both sides of the line, unless the Boche shrapnel burst unusually close. And then they would scamper for a dugout, laughing as if it were a huge joke to be shot at.

The last time we were up they were still there, although a shell had struck one corner of their house and demolished it. I could never figure why these girls and their mother



—the family was entirely respectable—or any of the other residents of the town persisted in staying in the face of such conditions. To tell you the truth, I strongly suspected all of them of being German agents; certainly the Boche were well enough posted on what we were doing to have had telephone connection from the town right out over No-Man's-Land to their headquarters. The only compensation was that the French were equally well advised regarding everything the Germans did. The accuracy of our information was as remarkable as that of the data Fritz managed to compile on us. When the Americans take over a definite and appreciable sector, I hope that they will clear out every civilian from an area extending back several miles from the line.

One source of information which the Huns work to the utmost of its possibilities is the observation balloon, or "sausage," which, as you know, is anchored at a distance too far behind the lines to be hurt by artillery fire, and is run up to a great height. From it observers telephone to the artillery all activities they pick up. On clear days the Boche always have a whole flock of these big bags floating, and I blame them for the artillery fire which pestered us from time to time while we were up front. I used to spend all my spare time cursing those "sossidges," and in particular one which looked down so inquisitively into my position that I felt its observer could see right into my dugout and know exactly what I had for each meal. The only effective weapon against the "sausage" is the aeroplane, and its chance of sneaking up and making a killing before the big bag can be hauled down is always slim. But some days ago the first two American fliers on this part of the front went out for game, and they got this same "sossidge" that had been my particular aversion. Because it rode exceptionally high they were able to nail it, although the Fritzes hauled down at it like mad, before



it could be got to safety. To quote Briggs, the *Tribune* cartoonist: "Oh, boy! but wasn't that a grand and glorious feelin'," when I heard about the drop in German sausage. The other officers had been inclined to kid me about my great aversion to it, but since it developed that the American aviators went after their game because the artillery commander of this sector told them that the greatest favor they could do him would be to stop the "sossidge" observation, I have not been kidded so much. German sausage stock isn't nearly so high these days, either—not much higher than the treetops, where it can't do much damage.

The French also use these observation balloons, but they do not dot the sky with them so thickly as do the Germans.

I know you will be interested to learn that several of my men reported seeing cats roaming around in No-Man's-Land while we were up on the front line. I did not see any of them myself, but I am not surprised that they were there, attracted from the deserted towns along the line to the trench systems which certainly teem with food for them. The men suggest in their letters that Chinese troops ought to solve the trench warfare problem because it wouldn't be necessary to have any Commissary Department for them.

Speaking of ruined towns, there was just west of the place where we were "in," in a locality where the lines were very far apart, an absolutely deserted village, situated entirely in No-Man's-Land. From our lines it appeared to be less shot up than some of the places behind the lines, which is only natural, after all. And speaking of cats, there was a fine yellow and white Tommy at my billet in the village we just left; all you had to do was pat him on the head and he would swarm up to your shoulders and rub against your head. He didn't care to be held in your arms, but he liked to sit clean up on your shoulder. I was sorry to leave him. We have a nice yellow and



white kitten here at this rest camp, but it doesn't know the shoulder stunt.

We are now occupying barracks in a very pretty wooded locality, and are comfortable enough except for the fact that all the officers are in one room, and the surroundings render writing rather difficult. Our mail continues to be irregular; it may be that the letter in which you referred to them may have gone astray, but I have never had any reference from you to the pair of shoulder bars I sent you some time ago. On the chance that they may have been lost, I am sending you another pair, which I have worn. I hope that they will not be mashed in transit, but if they are you can have them straightened out.

Well, I'll have to close for this time. Much love to Dad and yourself, and remember me to all the friends.

QUINCY.

April 28, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: This has certainly been package week with me. Day before yesterday I received one of the boxes of cigars Dad mailed to me, not the one with the pencils inclosed, however, which will come later I suppose, but the small box of Huyler's, sent with Sweet's compliments, and the copy of *A Night at an Inn*. Yesterday I got the big box of smokes Bill Gramer started toward me some time ago. And to-day the package of "American Mixed" candy arrived. It is needless to say that I am very popular. Your box of cigars arrived in the nick of time. I had just opened the last one I had on hand. This makes the third I have received from you. The boxlet of Huyler's was delivered right after supper, and it afforded each of us officers a sweet bite to end up our meal.

The box from Bill was a regular Santa's pack. It contained two boxes of "Corona" cigars,—which won't



mean much to you, but would mean a lot to a smoker, for that is one of the finest brands made, and is Bill's regular smoke for himself, so you know how good it must be—1,000 Murad cigarettes, two pound cans of pipe tobacco, and 72 packages of Bull Durham. My platoon is naturally sharing with me the tobacco and the candy, which is just fine.

I enjoyed the Dunsany curtain (and hair) raiser, but I agree with you that it has less to recommend it than some of his other plays. What a strange mind he has. I hope that he may survive the war, for his handiwork shows more innate genius than any that has been produced by other writers of the present day. Nevertheless, the things that hit home to the men over here are the poems of Robert W. Service. You have to do a hitch actually in the front line trenches, and see the ghostly flares throw their light over No-Man's-Land at night to realize how fundamental is his understanding of the soldier and the soldier's life in the present war. I would like to have a volume of his war poems, but I am not particularly interested in his *Songs of the Yukon*.

This "American Mixture," on which I am munching as I write, certainly hits the spot. It's one of my favorites. And Lieutenant Nelson sends his especial thanks for it. As he does not smoke he had been bawling me out for not getting anything for him in any of my packages. He sure is one good scout. Many, many thanks for your and Dad's goodness to me, and much love,

QUINCY.

May 1, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: You would surely enjoy visiting the village in which I am now residing. It is a quaint collection of Swiss huts situated in a thick forest, largely of hemlock. The French soldiers who have preceded us here have spent



a lot of time and artistic talent on the construction of rustic chapels and villas. A more picturesque environment in which to take a rest after a tour of duty in the trenches could scarcely be imagined. The very forest aisles among the trunks of the stately hemlocks are restful. This would be an ideal place to be in the summer, but now, in the time of spring rain, it has its disadvantages. One of these being that we are all crowded together in a one-room bungalow which is too small for half a dozen officers to be crated in day after day, and grows progressively more constricted as the days pass.

Letter writing is almost impossible in such crowded conditions. Could I devote myself peacefully to that pastime I could enjoy myself greatly in spite of being shut indoors, but as it is I am having to kill too much time at absolutely nothing. Too bad that we could not make the most of an ideal rest billet. For had the weather been kind I would have enjoyed myself thoroughly during many pleasant hours seated with my back against one of these hemlock trees with my pad on my knee.

Spring has certainly outdone herself in this instance to prove what a fickle wench she is. After those days of sunshine and blossoms, of which I wrote you lately, we have scarcely seen the sun for a week. Day follows upon day with damp chilly rain, varied once on the 20th by a snow flurry. I am led to believe that French weather is as variable as the French temperament has always been represented. I recollect very distinctly nights in the middle of January so warm that I sat in my room back at the inn, overlooking the lake I wrote you of [St. Ciergues], with my window open, and the air so balmy that I felt almost that I could take my coat off. But it's no use bawling out Mlle. Spring—any more than any other fair demoiselle.

The men take their isolation pretty hard. They feel



particularly aggrieved that they have had a pay day out in the woods where there is no place but the Y. M. C. A. to expend their francs. They would like to invest some of their remuneration for fighting the Boche in *vin rouge*. As I said before, there is very little drinking to excess. But whoever heard of a soldier who wouldn't crack a bottle now and then? Nor is it anything to a soldier's discredit so long as he doesn't make a sot of himself.

You would laugh could you read the protestations as written by the men to their wives and sweethearts regarding the absolute impossibility of French women. They assert that the pretty French girls they had heard so much about are just as pretty as they have found France to be sunny. One of them declared that he had been unable to discover any girls between the ages of 3 and 83, thus commenting on the curious phenomenon I mentioned to you some time ago: the fact that young women are as scarce as young men over here. Maybe the girls are too shy to reveal themselves to the Yankee soldiers, but I never heard the French girls accused of any such shyness.

Perhaps I have mentioned before that an almost universal defect among the French that I have noted is bad teeth. Men and women both seem to pay no attention to their teeth. I have seen a number of French girls who were really good looking until they opened their mouths. I supposed that this carelessness of the teeth was true only of the less educated people I had come in contact with, but our army dentists tell me that dentistry, as it is practised at home for the saving of teeth, is practically unknown except in the larger cities over here, the French dental surgeon's chief tool being his forceps. I cannot understand how such a condition can exist.

To return to the subject of our resting place, it is well known for its architectural attractions; in fact I had seen pictures of several of its most striking features printed in



the Sunday pictorial sheets of the New York papers before leaving home. Another aspect in which we are fortunate is in being the first American troops in this place. The people of the district are better off and more intelligent than those in the places where we have been billeted previously, and they look upon us less as a source of revenue than as friends in need for whom they cannot do too much. We succeeded in locating our officers' mess at a farmhouse, where the geese are properly scandalized by our invasion. And I had the pleasure of partaking of my first feast of goose—you remember we were always going to roast one—as cooked very palatably by the mistress of this farmhouse, who would have been willing, I believe, to serve us for almost nothing, and who is overwhelmed by our largesse. She is as good a cook—in a different way—as Madame Delanne, and her home is probably even older than Madame Delanne's, for it was built in 1617, as proclaimed by an inscription on the key-stone of the great door to the barn, which is constructed as a part of the dwelling proper, according to the universal custom.

The people in this section are much cleaner than those in the places we have occupied before; the fields are neater, and there is an appearance of prosperity about the whole countryside. The soil here is more productive, which is, of course, the explanation of the better condition generally.

We have got a lot of fun out of a graphophone which the officers of one of the other companies received from the States recently, along with a lot of fairly new records. I suppose we would have sneered at the little old music box had anyone started it up back home, but we sit around here in almost reverent silence listening to every note of every record from the comic monologues to the operatic selections. Some of the best records are by the



Brown Brothers' saxophone sextette, which played in *Chin Chin*, you remember. There are some good pieces from *Jack O'Lantern*, too. I am sorry that the barcarole from *Tales of Hoffman* isn't in the canned repertoire but don't undertake to send it to me, for either it or the machine might be broken before it reached me.

This reminds me to say, though, that I wish you would get —, if she is expert enough by this time, to typewrite for me a copy of Browning's *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*. You may recall my admiration for this poem, which is, I think, one of the finest ever written. I have wished often for a copy of it since I have been over here.

This, in turn, reminds me, by some queer quirk, to answer an inquiry which you made some time ago as to whether your letters to me are ever opened by the censor. No, none of your letters has ever been opened. I do not believe that there is much censoring of mail from the States, except in cases where there are grounds for suspicion.

One of the clippings in one of your recent letters contained a reprint in *The Evening Sun* of an article by Mr. Simonds, and I agree with his view that THE great battle of the war is now being fought on the left of the Allied line. I do not believe that the battle will be a German success. Von Hindenburg is clearly going to be considerably overdue in his entry into Paris, as proclaimed by him for May 1, but I do not believe that the German failure to win will mean an early end of the war. Judging from all that has happened in the past four years I expect to see the Germans hold on like grim death for a year or two. There are only two contingencies I know of which could bring the war to an abrupt end, in the only way it can end, and I have seen no indication of either. Without being unnecessarily pessimistic, it is only fair to say



that I think the people of the United States have still to be awakened to the magnitude of the task before them and the degree of sacrifice that will be required of them.

Do you remember the little newspaper man we met that day of the National Guard review while we were on the reviewing stand in front of the Public Library, Don Martin by name? I see that he is over here doing war corresponding for *The New York Herald*. There are articles signed by him in the Paris Edition every day. It would be odd if my next meeting with him should be over here somewhere.

I regret to report that our small dog mascot has deserted us. He had reached that stage in life when the wanderlust asserts itself, and we had had trouble with him for some time because of his willingness to follow every olive drab uniform he saw, although he never had much use for the French sky blue. I think he finally managed to attach himself in spite of us to the artillery.

Much love to Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.

Mills's newspaper friend mentioned in the letter above, Mr. Martin of *The Herald*, died in Paris of pneumonia in the winter of 1918-19.



## CHAPTER XII

PEACE OF A WAR TRAINING SCHOOL—CLIMATIC PARADOX OF SUNNY FRANCE—INSPIRING VISIT TO DOMREMY—TERRIBLE COST OF A VICTORY IN CHAMPAGNE.

AFTER one more "hitch in the trenches," a short one to judge from the dates of the last preceding and the following letter, Mills was now detached for his period of special instruction at the officers' training school at Gondrecourt on the edge of the Vosges mountain region, and some sixty miles to the west of Badonviller. He had, in fact, devoted nearly all his spare time to study from his arrival in France. Besides a number of treatises on war which he took with him from America he bought others from time to time. Altogether, thirty-two military text-books were contained in his baggage when returned to his parents after his death. Besides these, there was a large amount of manuscript matter. A thick batch of typewritten and mimeographed foolscap sheets, clamped together, is titled: "First Corps Infantry School; Tactical Section. This Literature to be Retained by Students." It covers all sorts of details of army organization from the section and platoon up to the division. Instructions are given for the handling of arms and for tactical manœuvres. The different topics are covered by abstracts of lectures by French and English officers.

This comprehensive document shows signs of much study, being margin-worn and stained from constant use. There are many notes in Mills's handwriting scattered



through the text, and the diagrams of section, platoon and company movements show additional lines drawn by him as he worked out the problems. Further, there is a thick blank-book with many pages full of his own pencil memoranda of lectures which he heard. The books also contain marginal notes and marks emphasizing certain paragraphs. The whole mass of evidence shows that he returned to the painstaking and conscientious methods of his years at the University. He was a true student. He took nothing for granted, but carefully analyzed every proposition before adding it to his store of knowledge. Several papers which evidently were submitted for criticism have written across them, in a hand not his, the word, "Excellent."

In respect to his army school work, it was not ambition that prompted his laborious efforts. What he thought about rank, promotion, has been seen. It was his sense of the officer's responsibility for the lives of his men that urged him on. This feeling has been seen in his letters. He talked on the subject to his mother, to his fellow officers in the regiment. It was a conscientious obsession with him. It made him glad, in view of his limited training, that he only held the rank of Second Lieutenant. One pungent sentence in his notebook under date of May 7, 1918, summarizes his conscientious attitude:

"The most promiscuous murderer in the world is the ignorant officer."

His letters now take up his experiences during this school period.

[FIRST] ARMY CORPS SCHOOL  
[GONDRECOURT, FRANCE], May 5, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Well, here I am back at school again, quartered in a long wooden shack of a barrack for all the world like the one in which I began my Plattsburg school-



ing just a year ago, less one week, today. It is hard for me to realize that a whole year has passed since I have worn civilian clothes.

This is quite a different school opening from the one at Plattsburg. Then the weather was miserably cold and rainy, and all of us cadets had a hard time of it huddling around the stoves to keep our patriotism warm. Today, the sun is smiling down upon France so brightly that at last we begin to see how the land got its name, "sunny." In fact, the weather has turned so warm that I have spent some time trying to buy summer underwear, my stock being stored in my other trunk back where we left our excess baggage on moving from our training area up to the line. My sleeveless sweater came off also, for the summer, I hope, and I am luxuriating in a balmy atmosphere which is more welcome than I can tell you, after the months of cold weather without adequate heating facilities.

On my way over to the training school, I spent what amounted to a three day vacation in one of the country's best known cities [Nancy], which is still a pleasant place to stay in, in spite of its shell-damaged condition. Another fine hotel next door to the one I stayed at had been thoroughly wrecked by Boche aerial bombs, but that did not prevent my relishing the luxurious experience of dining at tables covered with real linen and sleeping in a real bed. I spent my time inspecting very attractive public gardens, beautiful churches and the ancient château of the Dukes of Guise, now converted into a public school, in the gargoyles of which I was much interested. Those of Notre Dame will have to "go some" to beat these in grotesqueness.

"I wish I could name the city I was in, but the hint about the Guise family should be sufficient. The censorship regulation regarding the naming of cities in letters is in many instances unnecessary, but often it is needful, so



the rule has to be ironclad. I might have taken a day or two more and gone to Paris, but I did not feel like doing the sight-seeing such a trip would have forced upon me. I was inclined to loaf, invite my soul and smoke Bill Gramer's good cigars.

More again. Much love to Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.

In his next letter, Mills indicated that his company had served, before his order to school, in different trenches from those of his earlier experiences. Notwithstanding the change, they were still in the neighborhood of Badonviller. All the casualties in the Second Battalion of the middle and latter part of April and early May are recorded as from that point. However, he happened upon much more agreeable ground as he cheerfully explains. He had previously been in the locality designated as G. C. 12, which was in the valley of a small stream, and consequently was a mudhole. The new post, G. C. 8, was not over a kilometer distant, but it was on high ground in what had been fairly thick woods. From the point of view of living, the new region was preferable. But trees and stumps are hard on the nerves, as they have a queer habit of seeming alive and in motion during the hours of darkness.

May 8, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Some more interesting news for you. As my note of several days ago informed you, I am at school, but before assuming the student's rôle here in the [First] Army Corps School I had another one of those practical courses in the real school of war, the trenches. Do not think that I am minimizing discomforts and dangers for your sake when I say that this last hitch up front was really a pleasure. There were several reasons for



this, of which the fact that we had an abnormally quiet tour of duty was not the greatest. From our rest billet in the village in the woods, we moved to a trench sector also in the woods, and located on high ground, where the trenches were absolutely dry even in the rainy weather which continued during the period of our stay there.

You remember it was the extreme physical discomfort which I dwelt on as most appalling during my first service actually in the line, when I had the luck to draw a sector in which hip boots were none too high for the depth of the mud. This last time up, our trenches were only a good throwing distance from the Boche lines, so to speak, the Huns being located on opposing high ground with a narrow, densely wooded, steep-sloped valley running between. Not only did the upland trenches seem delightful after the mudhole we had floundered in previously, but the corner of the battlefront was actually beautiful, with the trees that cover it budding into leaf in the first warm, moist days of real spring. Of course there were many shattered tree trunks, but not nearly as many as you might suppose considering that the lines have opposed each other at this same point unchanged since about the third month of the war.

And the birds chattered and sang in the peaceful dell between the two armies, going about their business of spring housebuilding just as if there were never any roar of artillery to startle them. Strange indeed sounded the voice of a cuckoo that kept calling continuously through the stillness of that silent battlefield.

Oddly enough, the support position was the one of most danger in this sector we last occupied. We all lived in dugouts which pierced deep into the reverse slope of a hill, so deep that Fritz couldn't get at them with his artillery. But he had tried hard enough. The whole landscape that I surveyed from the doorway of my dugout had



been trimmed according to the best Kultural standards of landscape gardening. Not a tree in our front yard but had been hit by a shell, and beyond the road running along in front of our cave dwellings extended a forest of topless trees, many trunks standing askew, some of them roots up where they had been hurled out of shell holes of all sizes, running up to basins twenty feet across and deep enough to go swimming in. The "strafing" of this bit of woods must certainly have cost the Kaiser a pile of marks in the last four years.

The road I spoke of was a favorite spot for Fritz to fling over a flock of shrapnel shells, "flying pigs," every now and then on the chance of catching some unwary poilus or Yanks, and I assure you that "No Loafing" signs were not necessary along that highway. The men—and officers—stuck pretty close around the doors of the dugouts, and whenever the first sound came like a whole hardware store flying through the air it was a sight to see the dive for the doorways. If the volley hit close, the men would curse Fritz fit to make your hair stand on end for trying to kill them, and if it went wild they cursed him for his poor marksmanship. Either way he got cursed to a finish.

As a matter of fact, we were bothered very little by such visitations during our stay. Every indication pointed to the Boche's leaving very few troops on our end of the line in concentrating for the great drive in the west. The raids pulled by the enemy at various points at this end of the line seem to have been made by a comparatively few shock troops especially picked and transported from point to point for this purpose, with a view to making the Allies keep as many troops as possible here. The "flying circus" we have nicknamed this special detachment of Huns, and our men sat around all the time we were up, polishing their guns and automatic rifles and just naturally praying that it would "put on a show" for them.



"Lieutenant," said one of my automatic gunners to me, "if that ——— circus gets fresh with us there won't be enough of it left to make a side show!"

He was just about right, too, for our positions were as pretty as I ever expect to hold. Manned as we had them, they would be impregnable against even overwhelming numbers without long and concentrated artillery preparation, which would allow plenty of time for bringing up sufficient troops to stop even a drive of the magnitude to justify such artillery preparation. I would consider myself lucky to receive an attack in such a position, located in the foothills of the mountains, and constituting in itself a little Verdun.

I wish I could send you a picture of the dugouts in which we lived. In addition to being highly admirable from a utilitarian standpoint when something considerably harder than raindrops is falling, their exteriors, in so far as they have exteriors, are admirable in point of architectural construction. And their front yards had been fenced in with little rustic fences restraining walks that wind through miniature gardens out to the road. There are flower beds in which flowers are actually blossoming around artistic centerpieces worked out with Boche shells which failed to "strafe" when they came over. Undoubtedly the flowers were formerly sown in patterns by the poilus, but, now that we have relieved them, the flowers are springing this season from the seeds of those that withered last Fall.

I must not forget to mention the flock of cats that inhabit the underground village, and wax fat and fatter on the scraps from the kitchens. There was one half-grown gray Tommy that thought my cot just about the best place he had ever struck to nap on. These cats we found quite tame, as if they had been petted by all our predecessors. They must know what the klaxon gas warning means and



streak out for the gas-proof dugouts when it sounds; otherwise it seems to me they would have been "out of luck" before this. Unless a shell came mighty close these cats paid it no heed whatever.

The men got lots of fun out of their cave dwellings, posting signs at their doors christening them after this fashion: "Wiggle Inn" (strongly connotative of "cooties"), "Stagger Inn," etc. One of the new men who have come to us recently was frank enough to write home that "this is not a very wild sector, but it's plenty wild enough for me." They all stood their first experience well, though. They are a very good bunch from pretty nearly all over the U. S., and I am glad to see the N. G. enlisted men recognize them as such.

I left the trenches just a little ahead of the company in order to come to school. Just before leaving I received your first letter of April in which you spoke of the probability of your going South. I suppose the next letter will be from Statesville. I am sorry to hear of the state of Aunt Sallie's health but at her advanced age there was nothing else to be expected. I will try to number my letters consecutively again now that I seem to be settled for a while. While on the move, it was impossible to keep track of all the letters I sent or received. One of the men wrote home that he had the Wandering Jew and the rolling stone both beaten for perpetual motion, and he was about right. I received the package of pictorial sections, including the *Life*, and was glad to get them all. Lieutenant Nelson told me to tell you that the *Life* picture about the soldier and his box of candy hit me just exactly right, and also that you sent just the kind of candy he likes best. It certainly *was good*.

I am glad to know that you are investing my allotment money in Liberty Bonds, but I do not want you to invest it all that way. Spend some of it for things you want,



whether you need them or not. If I get back O. K., as I expect to, I won't need the money, and if I don't get back I won't need it, so I can't lose. If you are South I suppose Sweet is appreciating the significance of the saying: "As big as all outdoors." I would like to have seen him the first time he was turned loose in that big yard at —'s. Whether you are there or not, be sure to remember me to them all. I will write you something of the school later. Much love to Dad and yourself. QUINCY.

[FIRST] ARMY CORPS SCHOOL, May 12, 1918.

DEAR DAD: I am sending you a box that hasn't anything of value in it, its principal contents being two of my old hats. We cannot wear the hats over here, as they have been replaced for service by the small cap, cut on the French model. The caps were adopted particularly because they can be worn under the helmet, and will keep the head warm in cold weather. I might just as well have thrown the hats away, I suppose, but I thought you and Mother might like to have them. And, then, too, the Stetson was the first hat I wore in the army, and the other one I wore at Plattsburg, so both have certain associations because of which I would like to have them for the future. Both can be reblocked and made fit to wear. When I put on cits' clothes again I will probably retain the Stetson part of my uniform until it is *pas bon*, as the French say, and I have to buy new headgear.

The two bits of wood are pieces of a stick that I carried while in the trenches. The mud on them is real trench mud, so don't clean it off. I thought you might appreciate them as souvenirs more than something that might cost a lot of money.

I congratulate you on being in uniform also, and I am quite certain that if the Home Guard has to "croak" any Fritzes, nobody will enjoy the croaking any more than you.



The school work is progressing very well. It is much the same as the Plattsburg routine, except that we are learning the new dope that has come out since then. As a matter of fact, it is a sort of rest camp for me, in spite of the fact that we are kept on the jump all the time, for I had been up where "we have a 4th of July celebration every day," as the men put it in writing home, so long that it's a relief to be where things are quiet.

At the present writing the German drive is still causing no great concern over here. There is no doubt that it will beat itself out for nothing proportionate to the cost in German lives. The spirit of the French and British, both, is fine, and I can see nothing in the situation to cause the Berlin crowd any joy. Sooner or later they will get the gate, and the harder they make the Allies' job, the harder the terms of peace will be for them. I hope that this finds both you and Mother well. Much love.

QUINCY.

May 15, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Just look who's here in the two photographs inclosed. I had them taken for a joke, and they are—on me. You will note how slouchy I became lying around the trenches. I lost many pounds in weight, also. The drill here has done much already to restore my set-up.

This Red Cross envelope I inclose may furnish you with some clue as to where I spent my three days' holidays on the way to the 1st Army Corps School at this place. The cards I have written to you on I consider among the best battlescapes I have seen.

I received the box of candy and tobacco from Elvy yesterday. The fudge and mints were marvelously fresh—and *so* good.

Love to Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.



The city in which he spent the holiday was, as noted already, Nancy, one of the most beautiful places in France, full of history and tradition. He sent home a book of views of its most striking features.

May 19, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Had not the weather turned over a new leaf and given us the last two glorious, sunny days I would have come to the conclusion that Hartman, my striker, had just about sized the thing up right when he said, "They do everything backward in France." It had rained every day previously since my arrival at school, and, considering the preceding weeks of rain, regarding which I have already written you, I was beginning to cherish the suspicion that the name, "Sunny France," had been bestowed in a more or less Pickwickian sense. Hartman doesn't think any better of the British, for he delivered the verdict on them that "they make everything square." This unfavorable observation was prompted by the English army shoes, a number of which were issued to our men. He got a pair, and their square toes, heels and counters hurt his feet.

Much to my regret I haven't Hartman here with me. While I am with the company he, in his capacity of striker or orderly, keeps my boots cleaned, oiled and polished, and cleans up my quarters—when we officers have any quarters, which is not often when we are in the field.

This mud here is altogether the stiffest, most tenacious I have ever struck. The South Boston mud you are always reminiscing about isn't a circumstance in comparison. Consequently I have had to do a lot of cleaning up, as we are required to keep as neat as possible. The change from the front line is a sort of vacation, as I wrote you before, but the course leaves hardly any time between



7 A.M. and 9 P.M. daily, and I am not going to attempt to write long letters while here, as I want to devote all my energy to getting all I can out of the course. I know you will understand and approve.

I had more time for writing while up front than I have had anywhere else in the army. It is a curious fact that because of the easy time they have while in the trenches the men prefer being right in the front line to the support and reserve positions, where they are worked incessantly on carrying parties.

Love to Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.

May 22, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: All at once the lilacs are in bloom. Their purple splendor reminds me of the bowers in Central Park. But I have never seen anywhere else anything like the golden carpet of dandelions and buttercups which stretches here over the rolling hills of France. I inclose a wild flower of a sort I had never seen before. It appears to belong to the tulip family.

Your reference to the suggestion from someone in authority that too many letters are being sent to the men over here prompts me to say that any restriction would be a great mistake. If the men's communication with home and friends is at all limited, they will be dissatisfied, and dissatisfaction and good morale do not go together in an army.

The news of the crash in the price of eggs in New York reminds me to tell you that eggs we have been able to get in the greatest plenty in France. I am heartily tired of them. We have to pay from  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 6 francs, usually about  $4\frac{1}{2}$ , per dozen for them. Fresh milk and butter are scarce because all the dairies are drained for the cheese foundries, which seem to be the greatest national vice.



Summer is here in full blast, and the sun is blazing hot.  
All of us students have that tired feeling to beat the band.

Love to Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.

May 26, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Here are several flowers that I collected while on a manœuvre yesterday and stuck into my gas mask pouch. I don't know whether you will be able to make much out of them, but they interested me as being different from the wild flowers I am familiar with back home.

You can imagine what a beautiful effect the red splotches of the poppies make in fields yellow and white with asters and Queen Anne's lace and starred with the old reliable daisies. The yellow clusters inclosed grow on small trees, which are literally festooned with them, transforming whole hillsides into bowers. The wild asters, purple and yellow, which I send, are as large as some of the smaller garden varieties in the States. It seems to me that the flowers in the fields are more luxuriant and more beautiful than I have ever seen them before.

There are many sheep in this section, and it is not at all unusual to see a big flock of them, guarded by an old man or a girl, aided always by a faithful and voluble dog, browsing across one of these long, rolling hillsides, a regular Mauve landscape by the still greater master, Nature. And over such fields the clouds float in regular Maxfield Parrish skies. At last it is really "Sunny France." I understand better even than I did last winter why it is the painters' paradise.

QUINCY.

May 29, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: The inclosure, *Souvenir de Domremy*, explains itself. Having the opportunity to visit the



immortal Joan's birthplace, naturally I did not miss it. The day was one of the most delightful I ever spent. Domremy impresses you as being today exactly as it was when The Maid tended her sheep on the slopes overlooking it, a quaint village almost wholly without modern marks and almost exactly like the rest of the hamlets which dot the valleys and sometimes the hilltops of France. Not only are there no hotels there for the accommodation of tourists, a thing which surprised me greatly, but I even had to walk a kilometer to a neighboring town to get lunch.

Joan's home and the ancient church in which she was baptized are the most interesting places in Domremy, of course, because of their antiquity, but the church which has been raised to her on the site where she heard the voices bid her take up the sword for France is more than worth a pilgrimage such as I took to see it. It contains the finest mural paintings I have ever seen. They depict six scenes in the short eventful period of Joan's life. In coloring, particularly, they are marvelous.

Speaking of the pilgrimage to Domremy, another Lieutenant and myself set out to make it on foot, a pretty long hike, but we were lucky enough to catch trucks both ways. And in one of the trucks I found members of a hospital unit who informed me that the division in which I should have been had I not been transferred is now all over here. So all of my friends are here now. I wonder very much what kind of troops they are. I am sending you herewith some buttons from the uniform which I wore every day from my arrival in France up to my arrival here. While I am here, I am dressing up daily after the work is done, and I surely do enjoy getting into good clothes and swinging a cane. Incidentally, I am wearing for work now the same khaki uniform which I wore at the three Plattsburg camps I attended. It is rendering yeoman's service.



The resumption of German activity is surprising only in its tardiness in starting; the Huns do not usually permit such lulls when they once start an offensive. Love to Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.

P. S. The bit of honeysuckle inclosed I picked in the yard of the house where Jeanne d'Arc was born. It grows in as great profusion there as around our old place at home.

QUINCY.

He also sent home a book of views in and about Domremy, showing many of the places mentioned in his letter, as well as relics of The Maid and art memorials in her honor. Further, he wrote on an illustrated card, showing Joan's birthplace, to Mrs. Morris, already mentioned. He spoke of his visit and went on to say all Americans going to Europe should make the pilgrimage. He added: "The spirit of the French today is that of Joan of Arc. It was a most delightful day. . . . It is a gloriously beautiful country at this season."

June 2, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: You may have thought I had a lean and hungry look in the last two pictures I sent home along with the sections of my trench stick. I was thinned down by the service, but if you thought I was thin you just ought to have seen the Captain before he left us, or Lieutenant Younkin when I left the company. Their clothes hung on them like bags, as did Captain Casey's; I know you remember him. You will be relieved to learn that I am fattening up again with the good chow here.

Our fare is really sumptuous; much better than you folks are having back in the States, I'm sure. We always



have butter and plenty of white bread, biscuits, pie and cake—and doughnuts. It is nothing unusual for us to have steak and potatoes, peas, corn, fried carrots, radishes and pickles and dessert at a meal. Oatmeal and hot cakes are alternated at breakfast. The coffee is always good. So you see we are in pretty fine luck. Also, we have purchased the makins'—the men at my table, I mean—and hired a cook to make up for us batches of pies and doughnuts for midnight lunches.

In addition to the excellent fare, the work has continued to be a pipe. And I have had the pleasure of getting acquainted with officers from all over the United States. In fact, I am inclined to think that insufficient stress is laid on the fact that this is a school and not a vacation centre. I have learned a good deal, but I will undertake to learn more and have just as good a time in any week under proper conditions and competent instructors. Speaking of other officers, I have met here the only other man, with the exception of Quincy Sharpe, who has the same name as mine. He is Quincy C. Ayres, of Mississippi, and is a 2nd Lieutenant of Engineers. Many of the men at this school have not been up front, and the respect in which they hold us veterans is amusing. We, of course, vie with each other in preparing them for the worst.

I inclose a card picture of the church erected in honor of Joan of Arc. How the Huns would delight in destroying such an edifice! The progress they have made in recent days makes you feel that something is wrong that such a power of destruction should be suffered to go so far. But there will be a reckoning in time.

The order inclosed may interest you. It was my first order to go into the trenches. Do not show it to everyone. Much love to Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.



The order enclosed in this letter read as follows:

## U. S. ARMY FIELD MESSAGE

From P. C.

At P. A. Malgrejean.

Date: 3 April, 1918. Hour: 9:50 A.M.

To Lieut. Mills.

The 4th platoon under your command will relieve Lt. Pearsall, G.C. 12, today; relief commencing at 3 P.M. and being completed by 4 P.M., in small groups of not over 6 men. See that all men have 220 rounds of ammunition. You will not take over — men with you. See that Sgt. Osler is advised so he can rearrange chow details.

YOUNKIN.

This refers evidently to the tour of duty described in the last chapter in the letters of April 6 and 9. That experience, it appears, was Mills's first of actual personal duty in the trenches. When he was at the front in February, as is shown by his letter of March 15 to Mr. Luby, he was assigned to the battalion staff, and, while under constant artillery fire, he did not serve in the very front lines.

From Lt. Mills; At 1st Army Corps School.

Date: June 9, 1918; Hour: 10 A.M.

To: His Mother; How sent: By U. S. Mail.

Here's the regulation field message heading form, which I know will interest you.

I am in receipt of your letters up to May 18, and am glad to know that you have made the Statesville visit. All the home news interests me greatly.

If you have returned to New York I judge that you are having some more interesting experiences there. The only thing that surprises me about the U-boat raid off the coast is that it was so long in coming. The German threat to bomb New York City has been duly noticed here, and while it sounds bombastic I would not be surprised if the Huns found a way to carry out the threat. If they do



the only result will be to make the Americans really mad, just as the air raids on England affected the British. It must be strange for New York to be dimming its lights for war. Certainly if the Huns can reach so far we should be able to find a way to knock the roof off of Berlin.

In regard to the Lorraine cross, I can give you no information as to the reason for its double design, but the thistle is an emblem of Lorraine as well as of Scotland.

Don't feel badly about not being able to send me packages: I'd prefer the ship space to be taken up with munitions to be used in blowing the Boche to hell. Thanks for the clippings, and for the quotation regarding the presence of Bulgarians and Turks on our front. But there were no Bulgarians and Turks opposite us. That was just "dope," of which the supply is always abundant in the army. We know always who is opposite us because there are always Germans in ones and twos and twenties sneaking over and giving themselves up. That they are doing so is one of the most encouraging signs of the war. They report that, while their officers claim to believe that Germany will win the war, the men in the ranks have no such faith, and also that, while the officers live pretty well, the fare of the common soldier is rotten. They say that if the Americans were not so keen to shoot at every Hun they get a glimpse of many more Germans would give themselves up. They report, too, that they are told by their officers that the American troops are poor soldiers, but that they have found out from personal experience their officers are liars.

We get the news from the front here, and have just heard of an attempted raid on my regimental sector in which the Huns lost more than twenty dead and six prisoners, and got no prisoners themselves. Our loss: one man killed. The prisoners said that the German raiding party had to be urged out of its own trenches at



the point of the bayonet. They say that the truth as to the real fighting quality of the American soldier is now well known to the German private, and that the knowledge that there are 10,000,000 plus to come over has had a great effect on the German army's state of mind.

Taking our regiment as an example, some six raids attempted against us have not netted a prisoner for the Huns, who have lost instead more than 200 dead, not to mention several prisoners and their wounded. We were told in the course of a lecture yesterday that a German sergeant had presented himself in the 168th's lines several days ago announcing himself as an American prisoner, and warning of an impending gas attack. Thanks to this warning, the attack caused a minimum of losses, and the Huns were chewed up savagely when they tried to raid afterward.

Regarding your inquiry as to my personal experience with gas: I had two very slight touches, one when some gas drifted in from a salvo of gas shells thrown on a neighboring battery, and one when I helped load into an ambulance some artillery men who had been gassed and whom we wanted to get out of town before a bombardment, which didn't materialize after all. After the ambulance left I found that I had got a slight dose from the clothing of the men we handled. As they tell us here at school: "Gas continues to be the most deadly weapon of the war because men will persist in being damn fools." More than 95 per cent of the gas casualties are due to carelessness. You may be sure that gas will never get me for that reason. I have learned a good deal about gas here, too, and I expect to be able to safeguard my men by my knowledge.

I think the snapshots of Dad very poor, but am glad to have them. He favored me with an epistolary war dance of joy over the fashion in which several communities near



New York have shut down on German and Hearst papers—the same thing—and I join him heartily in the celebration.

I inclose a photograph I had taken in Toul, where I spent a Decoration Day holiday, meeting there a member of my old Plattsburg company, and having a most enjoyable time. Toul is a small city, but one of the prettiest places I have been in in France. This post card picture I had taken in Toul was made in a little shop just opposite the cathedral, which is beautiful. It is the finest piece of architecture, as to exterior, that I have seen, but its interior is less pleasing than that of the Winchester, England, cathedral.

The inclosed card from Mme. Delanne indicates her address. Censorship is essential to prevent information of immediate movements of troops, but I do not see what possible help it could be to the Huns to know that I resided at that old inn some months ago. I am sending you also a card marked "A Review in the Ruins of Baccarat." The last photograph I sent you was taken in a small gallery in these ruins, which resulted, by the way, not from bombardment but from the application of the Hun torch while the city was temporarily in the enemy's hands. From this card you will see that many sorts of soldiers took part in the review in the ruins.

My regards to all the folks and friends, and much love to Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.

June 12, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Many times since I have been at school I have wondered how it was that the British ever got their reputation for lack of a sense of humor. The bright and shining lights of a course which is more monotonous than it should be have been the hours in the



lecture room listening to Col. H—— and Captain S——, assigned from the British army to our teaching staff. Every man in school looks forward with genuine pleasure to the talks by these men, who keep the listeners chuckling all the time, and yet teach them more, almost, than do all the rest of the instructors put together. The fun in these men is so irrepressible that it bubbles over all the time. I am much more an admirer of the British character after knowing them than I ever thought I would be.

We have got equal diversion out of a sergeant-major from the famous Guards Division who drills us in close order, torpedoing every H right out of its proper position in the language to one where it doesn't belong, in giving his commands. He is one of the best drill masters, the best in fact, I ever drilled under. I only wish I were half as good. These British non-commissioned officers are more of the non-humorous sort of British, though; I think it must have been from the characteristics of the middle class which they represent that the race got the reputation for not being able to see a joke. You have to be on your dignity much more with the non-com than with the British officer. They exact dignity from an officer in a way which the American soldier would do well to copy. Such an attitude means more to morale in an army than can be expressed in words.

Nor is there any injury done to our greatly over-worshiped "democracy" in the British non-com's attitude. In fact, I incline to the belief that the British people are more truly democratic than ours; their government is certainly no less democratic—the crown is such an empty form that it may correctly be described as powerless—and is assuredly far more responsible. Indeed, could the common or garden variety of American comprehend how fully dictatorial his government has been as to how and when the U. S. should make this war, he would stand



aghast at his country's being called either democratic or republican.

Very much the same sort of morale I speak of in the British army is notable also in the French. And in my opinion representative government is more successful in this country than in ours for the reason that grim necessity, in the shape of a constantly menacing Germany, has made the French people think and realize that central authority has been essential to the survival of the nation. As great as the cost of this war must be in men and money I do not believe that the price will be too high if it only starts the American people thinking, and puts an end to their swallowing of eternal flattery from a horde of politicians who are worse as rulers than any royal family could be, because they are in the jobs only for what they can get out of them *in the present*, and have not even the incentive of building the government more strongly for what they can get out of it in the future.

I am sending you a booklet of views which I do not think the censor could object to as the Boche know as well as we do what they have done to the city in question. Hope it reaches you. Much love to Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.

P. S.: Some more flowers; they get prettier all the time.

June 15, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: School, like everything else, comes to an end, so I am on my way back to Company G. I hate to leave the quaint old stone-walled gardens of this town, into which the warm sun has coaxed the figures of ancient sunbonneted ladies who remind me of Grandmother in the garden which she so dearly loved to supervise. And I am departing before learning the history of the mediæval, round-turreted château about which the low stone build-



ings of the village are grouped. It is a tower with a history which dominates the scene, I know, not because anyone ever told me so, but because every inch of its conical roof is eloquent with romance.

Now that I am departing I suppose you will be apprehensive about me again, but perhaps it will reconcile you to know that even my school has not been danger proof. The Huns some time ago dropped an aerial message stating that they knew the educational institution was there, and promising to dump a little hardware on it when they could spare the time from more urgent business. We've expected the promise to be carried out several times during the present session. The enclosed card indicates the size and sort of hardware that the Gothas drop on such expeditions. No raids developed, but we soon got used to seeing hostile airplanes sailing overhead, and hardly a day has gone by without an air battle somewhere near. The other day, two Boche fliers appeared and peppered away with their machine guns at our cantonment from an altitude too great for any material damage to us. A telephone message to a neighboring American aviation field brought two United States pilots into the air and we received word soon afterwards that it was a case of *Boche fini tout de suite*. Our aviators got both their adversaries.

It was too bad Lufbery was not equally successful. I did not know him personally, but I have met the man who is his successor as the most noted American flier, Douglas Campbell. Campbell's brother, a Lieutenant of Engineers, has been at school here and in the same barracks with me. The aviator Campbell is one of the quietest, most unassuming men I have ever known, entirely free of the blatancy which is too frequently a mark of American character. To talk with him you would think him too mild a person to down two Boche planes in one day, chase



a third back to Germany, and then loop the loop over the German batteries just to show them that their shrapnel doesn't make a damn bit of difference to him. Considering the name he bears, I know you will say he couldn't help being a soaring success.

Mr. Simonds's conclusions on the German offensive are sound. It is hard to see the Huns gain an inch, but I believe that the Allies are playing the only game whereby they can be certain of victory. If Foch only seizes the right minute to strike, the war may be ended before any one realizes it. This is certainly within the range of possibility.

The booklet of views I mailed you three or four days ago will show you some of the places I have lived in and become familiar with in recent months. I was lucky enough to get the booklet on my Decoration day visit to Toul.

In regard to your allusion to the improvement in mail service at your end of the line, I know you will be glad to learn that the same is true over here. Hope it keeps up.

I sent Wallace Hoffmann a note yesterday. He has done a very fine thing.

I am now wearing my gold chevron indicating six months of service in France. Hope I can get to flash it on some of my Plattsburg schoolmates before they get theirs.

I inclose along with the picture of the Gotha bomb a gentler souvenir in the shape of several more flowers of another sort I never saw before. I hope these flowers I send press well enough for you to get some idea of how they look when fresh. And here is another picture I had taken recently. What do you think of this one? And what do you think of the moustache? *Tres beau*, the mademoiselles call it.

QUINCY.



P. S. Should the picture I sent recently (which was taken just when I left the trenches) have caused you any apprehension as to my thinness the one inclosed should dispel it. The school fare fills out all corners.

QUINCY.

This seems to be a favorable point for the introduction of what may be called an episode of Mills's letter writing, a few extracts from cards and letters not addressed to his parents. His fondness for children and his facility in making friends with them has been spoken of. One of those whom he greatly liked and who responded with affection was Miss Alice Hale Morris, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Morris, spoken of elsewhere. The friendship began when she had not emerged into her teens. When Mills went to Europe she was close upon High School age as appears. He wrote her a round dozen of little missives, which not only contribute to his picture of life in war but also in their whimsical gallantry to his self-revelation.

First of all there was a note from Governor's Island, sent on October 30, 1917, inviting her and her mother to visit him and see the camp. "We have big tents," he explains, "with stoves in them and are real comfortable in spite of the wind and cold." He had not been able to get home yet but expected to do so soon. He adds, "I hope to see you even if I have to wake you out of your beauty sleep." However, a note sent via Washington and postmarked December 21 regrets that he "had to run away without seeing her and her dear parents again, but when I got home it was too late to wake you up." He asks her to run in and see his mother "as often as you can for she loves you very much and you will be lots of company for her." "My love to you," he concludes, "and write to me as often as you can."



Then comes a Christmas day note:

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE,

December 25, 1917.

DEAR LITTLE LADY: I opened your Christmas packages this morning, just as you told me to do, and found just the thing I wanted most at that particular minute—a box of cough drops. Not that I have much of a cold, but I had told a brother officer to buy me some cough drops when he went to town yesterday and the darn fool forgot it. To tell you the truth, I think he forgot nearly everything else looking at the pretty French girls. Anyway, I forgive him—that's the proper Christmas spirit—in fact I forgive everybody but the Germans everything. But I spent part of the day practising up to shoot at them. We work all the time, you see, except when we're making signs to the pretty French girls and eating Christmas dinner with real turkey and "fixins!" I hope that you have had a fine Christmas and that you and your dear parents are well and happy. Write to me often and read my letters home; maybe I won't have time to write as often as you do.

With love and kisses,

QUINCY.

P. S. I didn't say "thank you" for your Christmas present on the other side of this sheet, but you know I meant it.

Q. S. M.

A French postal card "*Bonne Année*," showing a very Gallic boy and girl exchanging salutes in a wood, while two robins look on from a bough, had this inscription: "Much love and many kisses to my little lady. Q. S. M." And on another card on January 15, is this:

DEAR LITTLE LADY: Since I cannot receive birthday greetings I'm sending them. If the mail service doesn't improve I'll soon begin to believe something must have



happened to the United States. . . . Lots of love and hopes that you are happy. Q.

He thanks her for a Christmas card received on January 31. "Winter is pretty nearly over here before my Christmas mail arrives." And again on a card postmarked February 7:

Many thanks for your two sweet letters that have come with Mother's. My, what a smart girl you are, to be going to High School. I am going to a school, too—all us American soldiers are—for which we have to get up before daylight and from which we are not turned loose until after dark. And we're learning lots. Q. S. M.

Love to all.

Under the same date, but postmarked February 12, he wrote a letter:

[ST. CIERGUES], FRANCE,  
February 7, 1918.

DEAR LITTLE LADY: Here is a little medallion I bought for you because I thought it so pretty. It isn't solid gold, but it is good and I hope you will like it. Joan of Arc is one of the most admirable characters in history to me. And the French people of to-day have something—a great deal—of her spirit.

I wrote you a card the other day saying that we are all going to school over here to learn how to lick the Boche. Our school bell is a bugle that calls us out at 5:45 A.M. and we assemble now by moonlight. And it is moonlight again when the bugle turns us loose at bedtime. How would you like those school hours? This is just preparatory school, too, for when we get our high schooling and college courses in the trenches we will be in class 24 hours a day. So you see you are lucky just to be going to High School back in New York city.



## One Who Gave His Life

The school-children over here all dress alike, each one wearing a black smock, something like a wrapper, over his or her clothes, with a little peaked hood which can be put over the head in bad weather. The smock isn't a bad idea either, for the dirt which would otherwise get all over the children's clothes when they romp is all rubbed on it. And there's lots of dirt over here.

It is certainly good of you and your parents to spend so much time with my folk. Mother mentions in every letter she writes how considerate you all are. I really believe that she is having such a good time with you, she isn't a bit lonely.

With lots of love for you and the warmest regards for  
Mamma and Daddy,

Your friend,

Q. S. M.

Then there is an undated card, which must have been enclosed in a letter, showing a ruined village in Lorraine. On the back of it:

This card will give you some idea of that sort of kultur-blasted land we are living in. The more I see of what the Germans have done to this country and the people who live in it—particularly the women and girls—the worse I hate them. They are a race that should be wiped off the face of the earth—the women of them most of all. But you will be thinking I am too blood-thirsty. Well, so ought you to be, and all American women.

Regards to your Mother and Daddy and lots of love for yourself.

Q. S. M.

On March 19:

DEAR LITTLE LADY: I am waiting expectantly the arrival of your picture, for I've heard already how sweet you looked in your graduation frock.



Your letter was awaiting me when I got back from the trenches, for we've been up to do our first bit. The trenches aren't nearly as bad as you might think they are, but we made those on the other side of the line too hot for Fritz. When the Huns found that there were Americans opposite them they undertook to touch us up, and we came back at them so hard they just naturally had to move out of their first and second lines and stay out. The coolness of our men was amazing, and so was their eagerness to get at the Boches. The French say the Americans fought like veterans—and the Huns *know* they did.

A card of April 22, acknowledging letters and cards, comes next, with a picture of captured German flags displayed at the Invalides in Paris. Then comes, July 7 the last, alas, of all:

DEAR LITTLE LADY: I received your photograph last night and it is such a pretty picture. I am really much flattered to have a share in the thoughts of such a pretty young lady. I am sending you a little picture of myself in return. It isn't nearly as nice as yours, but maybe you'll appreciate it. What do you think of my moustache anyway? All of us officers in G Co. are growing them. Maybe we're trying to camouflage ourselves as Frenchmen. You know, it is a very rare thing to see a clean-shaven Frenchman.

From what Dad has had to say in his letters, you folks have been mighty kind to him in Mother's absence. He seems to be as busy as a whole hive of bees with his Home Defence League, and I am glad for him to have it to occupy his mind. Besides, he may have an opportunity to do some truly useful work in that way. Mother is making—or has made, doubtless, by now—a much longer stay



South than I ever expected her to, and I am glad of it, for the longer her visit the better off she will be, I think.

We had a real quiet 4th of July, but no doubt will have all the opportunity we want for celebrating later on. We have found France delightfully cool thus far, but very dusty. In the winter it's the mud and in the summer the dust that plagues us. The roads dry very quickly after rain, for all the soil I have seen here is porous. There are much larger sections of woodland than I expected to see, but you have only to look at the straight lines in which the trees stand, like soldiers at parade, to know that all the forests have been set out by hand. And the French will just about shoot you at sunrise if you cut a sapling as big as your wrist. We will have to be as careful of our American trees if we are to have any forests left.

Thank your Mother for the note I had from her some time since, and be sure to remember me to your Daddy. With lots of love and kisses,

QUINCY.

The following letter to his aunt, Mrs. J. L. Cowan, was written on July 4:

DEAR M. L.: Here is the latest copy of myself. What do you think of me by this time?

As incongruous as it may seem, I am spending one of the quietest 4th's of my existence. No doubt, I will experience plenty of celebrating of the most exciting sort shortly to make up for the present ennui. One thing about the army game nowadays, it's never dull if you belong to a scrapping unit. And this outfit is certainly in that category. Certainly the U. S. will not send over any soldiers with finer fighting spirit. The National Guard is wrong in theory, but the fine quality of its men will fre-



quently enable a Guard unit to triumph in spite of its handicaps.

Mother has left you some time ago, I suppose. She wrote enthusiastically of her visit home, which I am sure must have benefited her greatly, and most warmly of your kindness to her at your home. I hope that this finds you all well and happy. Don't worry if we can't finish the Huns this summer. Rome was neither built nor destroyed in a day. Much love to the family and regards to my friends.

QUINCY.

The series of letters to his home is now resumed. His return to Company G and to the trenches was at the same old place, the vicinity of Badonviller. But they had put on a new dress. Spring had decked war in the livery of peace. Mills could not resist the flowers. He risked his life to gather a little cluster for home. His mother still treasures the faded blossoms spoken of in the following lines:

June 18, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Even the trenches can be beautiful when they are trimmed with flowers, and the barbed wire forms a trellis for rambling vines, and shelter for innumerable thrushes and other songsters—one explanation, no doubt, of why the cats have a penchant for No-Man's-Land. The birds warble all the time, even when there is considerable activity, and it seems to me that their voices never sounded so sweet before. A number of them inhabit the six small trees, two birches and four wild cherry, which rise on the central island (entirely surrounded by trenches) of my strong point, or *groupe de combat* as the French call it. At the base of one of the birches is a flourishing wild rose bush, literally covered with blossoms, some of which I sneaked up and picked—keeping not only head but also the rest of me carefully DOWN during the



process—a while ago. Here are some of them for you, and also some daisies and yellow asters from the edge of one of my trenches.

I am sitting now in an armchair-like recess hollowed out in the side of a trench conveniently situated close to my dugout entrance. The sun is warm and I am enjoying a bath in its rays as I write. Several of the men, rolled up in their blankets, are snoozing noisily along the bottom of the trench nearby. These are the same trenches that were a quagmire of mud when I wrote you of them formerly. Now that the dry season is here, they are as comfortable as trenches can be.

This informs you that I am back at the old stand with the company, which I find much the same as ever. I am glad to be able to report the return of Bum to the fleshpots of G Co. After trying the artillery he decided that the infantry was the branch for him, after all. He was out to visit me with the chow carrying detail this morning. Now that the trenches are so dry he makes the rounds every now and then, and his calls always tone the men up, although their spirits are never by any means what you would call low. Indeed, their unflagging cheerfulness is marvelous. It does not interfere, however, with an increasingly grim determination to “give Fritz hell,” about which there is less said than there is shown in manner.

Fritz is certainly getting his share of hell in this sector now. All day long there has not been a period of ten minutes when something hard has not been traveling in his direction. When the artillery has not been throwing big ones over, the trench mortars have been plugging away at him, and when neither of these hell raisers has been talking, the machine guns have been sending strings of bullets over our heads, spraying his positions with indirect fire. These batteries of machine guns working remind



me of the racket made by batteries of steam drills hammering away at the rock bottom of Manhattan.

I know that you will be interested to hear that I have seen and had long talks with a number of my officer friends with whom I would have come over had I not been sent to this outfit. You can imagine we had lots to say to each other.

I inclose also some wild forget-me-nots from the edge of the trench near my dugout door. Love to Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.

The flowers for which he risked his life in No-Man's-Land were a bunch of wild roses. The letter reached his mother on July 21. On the day on which it was written, (June 18) the regiment—the entire Rainbow Division—terminated its service in Lorraine. Mills makes no mention of the change, perhaps he did not know when he wrote that it was about to take place. But in the next letter four days after it was made, he is still silent regarding it. He seems to have had always some plan of dating his letters so as not to correspond with his actual locality or the conditions of service.

June 22, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Here are some flowers from the garden of the château utilized as our battalion headquarters [in Badonviller] from the top story of which I witnessed the bombardment I wrote Mr. Luby about. The garden is laid out in squares edged with box bushes trimmed to about a foot in height, and the flowers are blooming thick in its beds. We have a vase full of them on the table at our officers' mess every meal, and while I was on the line during the last hitch my runners picked a bouquet religiously every day for the empty shell case which we kept for a vase on our dugout table.



We have continued to keep things warm for the Dutch, who are apprehensive, I think, of a smash against them in these parts because of the great activity on our side of the line. Our batteries "got to" a big Boche ammunition dump behind the woods just opposite my G Co. the last morning I was up, and the sound of heavy explosions followed for half an hour, with an accompanying pall of black smoke that hung over the trees until noon. I regret to report that everything has not been entirely in our favor during recent days, however, for the Boche have at last succeeded in capturing prisoners from our regiment. They got six men from one of the other companies after 8 A.M. the other morning by a ruse. For more than three months they had tried to get prisoners from us by raids but without success. Every time they put down their barrage and came across under the cover of night they got shot all to hell. On one occasion, their last attempt by the aggressive method, they got into the front line only to be chewed up there, leaving ten dead and four prisoners, thus saving us the trouble and expense of making a raid for prisoners ourselves.

All telephone conversations can be picked up by the "listening in" process, as you know, rendering strict adherence to code absolutely necessary, but after this abortive raid an uncoded invitation was extended to the Boche to come again. Instead they changed tactics. A lone German showed himself pretty close to our line in a wooded section where No-Man's-Land is all underbrush, and was taken for a sniper, as he was intended to be. Three Americans went out to get him and were fired upon, losing one dead—but they got the decoy to square that account—and then several strong parties went out to the front to get the two bodies. These parties worked up nearly to the German trench without seeing anyone, but when they started back they found themselves suddenly



confronted by greatly superior numbers of Boche who had remained concealed in the shell holes until they passed. The Americans had to fight their way back to their own trenches, and six of them did not get through.

This incident was of particular interest to me as a similar lone German had showed himself rather ostentatiously very close to the G Co. line when I was in, a few days previously. In fact he made such a show of himself as to look a little too good to be true and drew only a couple of rifle grenades. The next afternoon a sniper let loose with a couple of rounds at our position. And that time we combed No-Man's-Land so clean with rifle grenades—they are just about as bad medicine as 3-inch shells—that if there were any Fritzes in ambush they surely had one devil of a time. At any rate, we were favored with no further attention.

It looks very much as though the other company bit on the trap that was laid at first for us. Anyway, the same game won't work twice. In their various attempts to raid our regimental sector the Boche succeeded in killing several men, but counting their known losses—and they always carry their dead back whenever possible—they paid at the rate of about ten to one for every American, including the last six of our men, who may not have been taken alive. In all, our regiment has killed off about a company of Huns, and the additional casualties in wounded have amounted to as many more. Which is not doing so badly at all.

The prisoners we have taken say their officers tell them that the Americans are poor fighters, but that the German privates have an entirely different opinion so firmly ingrained in them that one of the raiding parties sent over against us had to be prodded out of its own trenches with bayonets.

I know that you are naturally much disappointed at the



German success of this summer, but I would not do any worrying about it. The French and English are both very confident of the outcome; they are even more sanguine as to the cessation of hostilities than are the Americans. I am certainly happy to have my personal destinies in the hands of Foch, as I may have said to you before, for I believe that he knows his business, and that if I am sent anywhere under his orders it will not be a case of "somebody blundered." It is good to feel that way. And I will state candidly that I believe more people than the Germans will be surprised by the sized kick in the slats the Huns get some one of these fine days. Even the fall of Paris would not mean a Boche victory, and no one on this side of the line expects Paris to fall. So keep on smiling. Much love to Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.

In the next letter, concealment of the great change that had come about disappears. This is what had happened. On June 18, after four months of active service on the Lorraine front, the regiment was marched back toward the Moselle. There, it entrained and was carried west a twenty-four hour journey to the valley of the Marne. Regimental headquarters were established at St. Amand and the men were quartered there and in surrounding villages. It remained there until about June 27, having a complete period of rest and recreation. The men played ball, had concerts, bathed in the river, enjoyed themselves with all the rebound that comes to soldiers after a period of desperate strain.

And the Lorraine experience had been a terrible one for men who had never before seen a gun fired to kill or injure. The 168th had had almost four months of continuous combat in the trenches or in reserve. It had had more than a hundred of its officers and men killed and from



six to seven hundred wounded, many very seriously. Nobody enjoyed the relief more than Mills, but it was nearly over when he began to write about it:

June 26, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: You will be rejoiced to hear that I am back in a rest and training area for a while. We can hear the deep-throated baying of the guns, very far away, sometimes when there is a great deal of artillery activity and the wind is in our direction, but we are away back and due to remain there for some time.

The outfit needs the relief, too, not because of having been shot up, but because continued service in the front line tends to lower the morale of any military organization, no matter how good it may be. And this regiment has done a long hitch, as you know.

There are many American troops here now, so many that their number is often surprising when you strike traffic centres where columns are passing in various directions. And I am here to tell you that the sight of the American soldier fills the French heart with joy, and inspires lively demonstrations. The good account the Americans have given of themselves wherever they have been in the line gives the French great confidence in us, and renders them absolutely sanguine as to the result of the war. And in spite of the apparent recent successes of the Huns, and of the certainty that there will be further pressure from them in the west, the situation is far less encouraging for the Teutonic powers than it appears to be on its face. The collapse of the Austrian offensive against the Italians is the clearest indication at this time of the actual situation on the other side of the battle line, Austria's condition is actually little better than Russia's, and the collapse of Russia has proved thus far a barren victory in most respects, except for the relieving of Ger-



many's Eastern army. It must be becoming apparent to the German people as well as to Berlin that they must win now or never.

The prolonged inactivity of the Boche is evidence in itself of the frightful price they paid for what they gained in their last offensive. Had they not suffered so heavily as to render further striking impossible for the time being, they would never have sacrificed the advantage of their initial success. That the Allies have more ground to sell at the same rate in German dead I have no doubt. Further German gains are admitted beforehand if they want to pay the price. In fact, the Allies may be compared to "land boomers" in this respect.

From the press, I judge that Japanese activity in the East is only a matter of time. In fact, it would not surprise me to hear of it at any moment. If it can be effected without arousing the opposition of the Russians, the whole consideration which has kept Japan out of Siberia to date, I presume, the Russian collapse will be wholly neutralized. You see I am an optimist on the subject of the war; I am firm in the conviction that German advantage is far more apparent than real, and that nobody is so bothered over this fact as Berlin.

I have seen a great deal of the American drafted army in recent days and I am enthusiastic on the subject. I have never seen finer soldiers. If they only do as well as they look, they will be invincible. I cannot tell you how tensely I await news of how they deport themselves in action. Their appearance is sufficient tribute to the ability of the training camp officers to whip men into shape, so far as the mechanical and disciplinary phases of soldiering go. If these troops only have the fighting spirit! And I am firmly convinced that the great mass of them will. I had long talks with many of my old friends, and you may be sure that we poured out our hearts to each other.



I continue to marvel at the wild flowers of France. Our way to the town in which we are now billeted was through rolling fields white with daisies, with great splotches of brilliant red poppies and purple larkspur to make a real color scheme. The poppies are the most wonderful flowers I have seen here. They grow in such profusion as to make you wonder whether the French, with their irrepressible love of the artistic, sow the seeds broadcast just as they plant every row of trees with a view to delighting the eye. Even the grainfields are dotted thick with poppies. And they are large enough to make you suspect them of being of cultivated variety.

This village, like all those around it, takes you back to mediæval times, with its houses built of hewn timbers, the interstices between which are filled with mortar. All these buildings are of the Elizabethan type of architecture, and appear fully that old. The people are very conservative, and are much cleaner than those of the district where we first lived. Here, as everywhere else, young women are as scarce as young men; but I think I have solved the mystery. I had the pleasure of motoring in a fine big car all the way back from school to my regiment, and en route we passed through munition plant towns where we saw hundreds of young women and girls, all clad in stocking-and-bloomer-shirtwaist uniforms. I am sure that the girls have all been called to such service behind the lines. And they surely do look cute in their working suits. They lined up along the curbs when they saw our machine coming and cheered and clapped their hands and threw kisses until we were out of sight. It was a great temptation to reach out and gather in an armful of beauty and take it right along. American soldiers on leave are certainly lucky devils, for the French women simply rave over them. I am hoping to get some leave myself sooner or later—and not too later.



Here's hoping that you and Dad are well, and that I may have some mail from you soon. Haven't had any letters for some days owing to the change of base. Much love.

QUINCY.

The policy of obscuring dates and locations is resumed in the letter which follows. On June 27, the Rainbow Division was ordered transferred to the Fourth Army, commanded by General Gouraud and operating in Champagne. On that afternoon it began a march of 35 kilometers, about 21 miles, toward the front, and at daybreak on the 28th, thoroughly wearied, the 168th entered the small town of Courtisols. There it remained until July 3, so that the letter which follows must have been written there:

June 30, 1918.

DEAR DAD: As to my opinions on the elimination of the German press in America, I am heartily in favor of its elimination and disagree with *The Evening Sun's* view. The argument that the German-American press may enable the Americans to keep posted on the German language and thus be able the better to combat Prussianism is fallacious, in that no simon pure American ever reads the German-American papers. The German-American press has been always strictly propagandist in character, being founded and subsidized by Berlin for the express purpose of subverting Americanism. It should have been suppressed years ago. The fact that many German soldiers have been found to speak English is not due to the fact that there has been a large English-German press in Germany for many years, but to the fact that Germany systematically educated Germans in English for years so as to have this advantage in the present war.

If we want to have similar advantage, the only way is to



educate Americans systematically in the German language for that particular purpose. As things stand, to permit German communities and a German press to exist as such inside the confines of the U. S. is an anomaly; they can form an unnatural barrier to the Americanizing of people of German blood. The same thing is true in lesser degree of the other foreign language presses in the United States. Too many blunders are committed in the name of freedom of speech. If America is good enough for foreign peoples to immigrate to, its language is good enough for them to learn and speak.

I am glad that the attempt to build specimen trenches in Central Park was defeated. It was indefensible. Your pamphlet about the devil's resignation has had wide circulation already in G Co. because the man who wrote it is known to many of the men.

So you want me to go over into Germany and get a Boche helmet for you. Well, that's rather a large order. The Boche have a way of hanging on to their headgear. But in due time I will no doubt have some personal souvenirs to send you. Whenever our men have bagged Germans it is a fact that they have darn near cut the clothes off them for souvenirs. It is a joke in the outfit that whenever anybody shoots a Boche his buttons are off before he hits the ground.

Just keep my commission for me. Have it framed if you want to. It would be only in my way over here. Congratulations on your Defence League company's having won the silver cup. Maybe I will have the chance to put you through your paces some day and see what you really can do. Here are two of my most recent pictures, same as I have sent Mother already, and a copy of our regimental paper, *The Wild Rose*, which is issued by Chaplain Robb of the 168th.

Give my very best regards to all my friends. Let me



hear from you when you have time. And I think you may be sure that the men in the army generally share my views as to the German-American press. Love to Mother and yourself.

QUINCY.

The regiment was now in the general neighborhood of Chalons, historic ground for fifteen hundred years, made more memorable by the new life and death struggle in progress upon it. It is a barren section of Champagne, the landscape being made up largely of chalk and heather. However, the American soldiers had several more days of peace in it until the night of July 3 when they were once again sent marching in the direction of the battlefront. They advanced from Courtisols twenty miles to Camp 3-5. On the Fourth, they reached Suippes, battered into ruins by the German guns. Presumably it was while halted in this place that Mills next wrote, or it may have been just after, when the regiment was cantoned in Camps 3-5 and 4-5, about four kilometers to the north of the ruined town:

July 4, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: I know you will applaud my celebrating the Glorious Fourth in an eminently safe and sane way by writing to you. One of my men in a letter I just censored declared he wouldn't feel as if he were celebrating the occasion properly unless he were back in the trenches, but he will probably have all the opportunity later to make up for any present omission.

This leads me to comment, as I had intended doing before, on young France's insatiable appetite for celebrating in any noisy manner possible. You would think the youngsters in the half-ruined towns in the advanced areas, where it was quite the ordinary thing for shells to let go



close by, would have had enough of noise, but I have seen bunches of them busy setting off the French equivalent for firecrackers by the half day. The sight of these gamins gamboling around with their gas masks slung over their shoulders ready for use against gas shells always struck me as strangely incongruous. But now I am diverted by a very different sort of gamboling with which a very different variety of kid is favoring me. The barnyard upon which the window of my present billet looks is populated by a very cosmopolitan citizenry, prominent among its best families being a goat tribe which is in no way in danger of the race suicide peril attributed to France. Its kids furnish me with no end of amusement by their gambolings and caperings.

I have just been in conversation with the mistress of the barnyard, an elderly widow of extremely ample proportions, who told me of her two sons in the war, one now wounded and in a hospital in Paris, and the other still fighting for France after seeing both the battles of Verdun and Rheims. This leads up to a fact which will cause you much gratification, I know, namely that with the past two months I have, all at once, sprouted a very handy French vocabulary, and can manage to come to an understanding with pretty nearly any of the natives I strike, although I find it always much easier to understand and make myself understood by the educated class. Also, strange as it may seem, if it happens to be a demoiselle, petite and pretty, with whom I am conversing, I frequently amaze myself by my loquacity.

I am glad you are to realize some ready cash out of your farm, but I must confess that it goes to my heart to think of stripping it of its trees. I feel that I never want to visit it again, although, of course, small growth will in a few years keep the land from looking so bare. I think you will admit that my judgment as to holding on to the



place has been justified by the price you received for the timber. I would advise you to continue to hold on to the land now. By all means invest the money in Liberty Bonds.

I am interested in the Simonds and Belloc war resumé's, and hope you will continue to send them. They are very reasonable interpretations of events in the field, and always enlightening in some respects.

Your reference to the Statesville mocking birds reminds me to say that my school area teemed with them, and the way they sang in the bright moonlit nights of my stay there [nightingales?] was a great joy to me. I have heard none here or elsewhere in France that I have been.

Just while writing I had a surprise that will interest you. I called in one of the men of my platoon to do a company errand. He was a new man, one of the drafted bunch that came to us two months ago, and I idly asked him where he hailed from in the U. S. His reply was, North Carolina. His name is Bringle, and his home is in Salisbury. And I can assure you he was a happy soldier to learn that his platoon commander was almost from his own town. He is a very good soldier, quiet and earnest. He told me he could have claimed exemption as a worker in the Du Pont powder mills, but didn't feel like doing so, and that he has a brother in the regular army.

I am inclosing another one of those booklets of views, and hope it reaches you O. K. I inclose also one of the company's daily mess menus, which I have to supervise as company mess officer. The men's fare is solid and there is plenty of it. They get plenty of white bread baked in army bakeries, but we officers prefer the French war bread, or "black bread," as the French call it, and always swap our share of the issue for some French family's daily ration. The French are eager to trade, but I can't see why. Love to Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.



The mocking bird does not inhabit Europe. It is likely that Mills mistook for it the nightingale, which is the only bird that sings by moonlight in that region. In sweetness and quality of note, the two might easily be mistaken for each other.

By way of proof that he did not exaggerate the good fare of the American soldiers, the menus he enclosed are interesting:

Breakfast	Dinner	Supper
Coffee	Beans, boiled	Mashed potatoes
Bread	Beef “	Gravy
Bacon	Potatoes “	Steak
Gravy	Coffee	Coffee
Butter	Bread	Bread

The division now advanced into a wooded region which with two French it held against nine German divisions mustered for a drive to recapture the line of the River Marne. The French high command had advance intelligence of this attack and made corresponding preparations. Every night from July 4 to July 14 the entire army took the alert at midnight and stood under arms until daybreak ready to smash the enemy's onset. General Gouraud issued a general order to the troops in which he said:

We are awake and on our guard. . . . You will fight on a terrain that you have transformed by your labor and perseverance into a powerful fortress. This fortress will be invincible and all the approaches will be well guarded.

The bombardment will be terrible. You will support it without weakness. The assault will be fierce—but your position and your armament are formidable. In your breasts beat the brave and strong hearts of free men.

None shall glance to the rear; none shall yield a step. . . . You will break this assault and it will be a happy day.



During the period of waiting, Mills found time to write three letters, if the dates be regarded as genuine. It will be observed, however, that they make no reference to the impending fight, in fact seem to have no reference to actually prevailing conditions. The location of himself and the dating of the letters of July 12 and 14 at a rest camp is particularly puzzling unless he happened to be in reserve on these days, for on both the army was in a fever of expectation of the attack which actually opened at ten minutes after midnight on the morning of the 15th.

The most plausible explanation seems to be that in order to avoid stimulating pictures of terror and peril in his parents' minds, he never spoke of any fighting in the future or present tense. Only when it was over, did he reveal the dangers he had passed and then sparingly. Only once did he depart from this policy of acknowledging his own risk. The occasion will be found in the next chapter and it has a strange significance. The following, though seemingly contemporaneous with one of the hardest fought and bloodiest battles of the war, breathe little but a spirit of peace:

July 8, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Thanks for ——'s fourleafed clover. Between hers and ——'s I should have good luck. Your references in your recent letters to the heat remind me to say that the coolness of this climate to date has amazed me. To-day I am wearing a sleeveless sweater, a flannel shirt and my blouse, and I am not more than comfortable. There has not been a night I have not slept under my bedding roll's sleeping bag and three blankets. The temperateness of the weather has been a great blessing to us. The few hot days have gone hard with men who never knew before what it was to have to go without ice and ice cream and ice cream sodas. I really believe that on



such days they would prefer an honest-to-God American ice cream parlor to all the wine cellars in the earth. About the only way to come in contact with ice over here is to be sent to hospital, and this is a means not altogether popular.

We haven't had a single thunderstorm, and this in spite of the fact that the crops are advanced almost to the period of harvest. Some of the grain appears to be fully ready for the reaper, but the fields of wheat are not yet ready for cutting. There is much wheat in this section, and it is of the finest, standing nearly to my shoulder. It seems queer to see no corn anywhere. Potatoes are grown in great profusion, and do not seem to be attacked by bugs as in our country.

The people are frugal but well-to-do generally, and this is the first time I have been in a house in France where the walls were not covered with Catholic symbols. Evidently there are Protestants here. We are the first American troops to be billeted in this locality, and the people are very kind to us. But I fear that our prosperity will spoil them, as it does everywhere. One of our men created something of a panic by displaying when he shaved out at the watering trough his gold washed shaving kit—it sells for \$10 back in the States. The old Frenchman who owns the place called in all the neighbors to see, and I have no doubt that word went abroad immediately that even American private soldiers have solid gold shaving sets.

On our railway journey hither the men had a treat in the sight of a real American locomotive with "a real HE whistle," as one of them put it in writing home. They express at all times deep contempt for the shrill squealing French locomotives, and the continental freight cars always evoke laughter. One of our men says he is going to take one home with him for a watch charm, and all



compare them with the 10-cent store toy tin trains. "Never before," wrote one, "had I gotten an idea of the true value of a soldier. In one end of the tiny box car in which I rode were four mules, in the other, twenty of us fighters for democracy." But the men always treat such hardships as jokes. Whenever they passed through railway stations they always "B-a-a-d" and "M-o-o-d" in chorus, while the mystified French probably concluded that all Americans are crazy.

The spirit of the men has been always fine, whether riding in overcrowded and springless box cars or marching with heavy packs. The hikes have been hard and many men have had to drop out, but it has done me good to see the drafted men of the company grit their teeth and stick to it.

Some of them who were not fit to hike refused transportation just because they didn't want the volunteers to think them quitters. That is their spirit, and it is a good sign for the National Army. And I get a lot of satisfaction out of the fact that the man who is the life of my platoon on trying marches is a drafted man, an Irishman from Pennsylvania named Forney, who always begins to open up just about the time he sees the fellows getting tired. From then on, he kids everybody, keeps everybody laughing, and somehow everybody gets in without knowing how.

He has a little running mate named Hancock who acts as his foil, and between them they beat any vaudeville comedy duo I ever paid money to see. On our last hike Hancock, who is our company pigeoneer, was affected by nose bleed, and Forney kept the whole platoon in hysterics the rest of the hike describing how Hancock had been kicked in the face by one of his own pigeons. The fact that Hancock carried no pigeons, and hasn't had any since being trained for his job, didn't affect the humor of the situation.



It's a great life, but I don't believe you would appreciate the hiking.

Much love to Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.

July 11, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: I have a little time at present, and will take advantage of it to drop you an extra letter, as writing letters is my favorite outdoor and indoor sport, giving me almost as much pleasure as receiving them.

If I remember rightly, you inquired somewhat tentatively a while back as to the nature of the beverages we get to drink over here. Well, A. E. F. orders limit soldiers to light wine and beer, but as a matter of fact you can get pretty nearly anything you want, and I have tried about all varieties. I am just about as hard a drinker as I have always been, so you needn't worry. Personally, I would be glad to see a bone dry army for the good of all concerned, although I have had no trouble of any real account with my own platoon on the drinking score.

I consider it best to be tolerant with the men. So long as a man keeps himself fit at all times for service while up in the fighting area, I am not going to see him if he gets happy back in the training area, unless he gets so badly lit up as to render discipline necessary. There is a whole lot to the case as presented thus by one of my men: "Lieutenant, what the hell is a man goin' to do if he don't get vin-rouged-up once in a while? They keep us either on the line or confined to training areas where we can't get to even a good village, let alone a city. And a soldier's a human bein'. If he don't get a chance to let off steam once in a while, he'll go crazy."

I have to admit that a soldier is human, for more than once when I have been hard worked and sore on the world in general I have had to put a bottle of champagne under my belt to get out of the rut. But not one of my men



has ever seen me under the influence of liquor, nor, indeed, has any officer. I use the cup that cheers strictly for cheering, and not inebriating, purposes. And, on the whole, I feel that the men hold themselves in hand mighty well. If they could buy ice cream sodas I really believe that the amount they spend for booze would be cut in half. Now that the dry season is on, the roads are thick with a fine, white, powder-like dust that chokes your throat and makes you mortally thirsty. Drinking water that has not been chemically purified is forbidden, and after it has been so treated it is never as cool as before. Ice is unknown. So, many times, I have bought bad wine in an endeavor to slake my thirst. This water situation is, in fact, our greatest hardship in summer just as lack of fuel is our greatest hardship in winter.

As to my own indulgence: I have invested quite heavily in champagne, which is relatively cheap here. I find a clear white wine known as *Graves* one of the most pleasant drinks obtainable, however. One of my winter favorites was "*chaud rhum*," or "*grog Americain*," which is nothing more than an excellent hot toddy concocted with boiling water, Jamaica rum and sugar. This is sometimes made with cognac, but I prefer my cognac in coffee. Coffee heavily spiked in this fashion is one of the finest drinks I have tried for cold weather.

The French are great on brandies made from all sorts of fruits. *Cassis*, made from cherries, is very palatable, but most of them I do not care for at all. The most virulent of all of them is *mirabelle*, made from plums. It is a fiery white liquor corresponding to American "third rail" or "white lightning," and three drinks of it will make you climb a steel high-tension pole and bite the insulators right off the crossarms. I know, for I've tried it—once. Never again! The one thing the French authorities have really shut down on is absinthe. Perhaps there are places where



you can find it in the big cities, but I haven't been able to taste any yet. Very passable beer is obtainable, and I have lapped up some of that, too, but not as much as I would use if it were good American brew.

Speaking of the dryness of the roads, the dry season is just as dry as the wet season is wet over here. Showers are rare, and we still have to have our first thunderstorm. I have been very much pleased at the fact that the men in writing home are now expressing a much higher opinion of France than they did when they first landed and wallowed in its mud. The fine fields of grain appeal to them, and they are always remarking on the smooth highways and the wonderful wild flowers. They would all prefer to be back in the good old U. S. A., though. But I believe that if they could only "parler" with the mademoiselles when they meet them they wouldn't think this such a bad country after all. Personally, I don't think it half bad. And while "war is hell," as Sherman said, it has certain compensations if you can only get to a real civilized town now and then.

I hope the pressure will let up some time so that officers and men can get their leaves. We have been at the grind pretty steadily ever since our arrival, and leaves would be of real benefit. But as long as the Hun drive menace lasts none of us would want to be running around enjoying ourselves at the rear, of course. The long period of German inactivity is a most surprising thing. And, however much the Huns may be gathering their strength for another mighty lunge, the great length of time between lunges is most eloquent testimony to what the others have cost them. I have thought each week for the past month that the next must surely see a resumption of the great battle. That the resumption must come soon is inevitable.

Dad referred in one of his letters to Mr. Cole, of *The Evening Sun*, having entered service in some fashion. He



is with the Y. M. C. A., and will no doubt stand his share of danger. Two "Y" men were killed and one injured with our outfit. They perform a real service, and it's to Cole's honor that he's doing his bit that way.

The Red Cross has been more in evidence recently, having distributed tobacco and chocolate. If it could manage to provide ice cream cones at cost it would certainly confer a priceless boon. The men had a lot of fun some time back out of a story in the papers about night-shirts the Red Cross had sent over—for the soldiers in hospitals, I suppose. Anyway, the idea of soldiers in nightshirts hit their funny bones.

Well, I guess I'll ring off and go have a look at the company supper, one dish for which, it may surprise you to know, will be German fried potatoes. "Another reason for fighting the damn Dutch," as one of my men wrote back on hearing from home that his little sister had German measles. Much love to Dad and yourself, and regards to the friends.

QUINCY.

REST CAMP, July 12, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Another bunch of mail from you to hand. It surprises me that you have no strenuous protest to offer against the moustache. One of my reasons for raising it was to kid you. It will interest you to know that said moustache is *red*, and does not at all match my hair in color. Suppose I will now have to emulate Mr. —— and dye it.

I am much relieved by the receipt of your earlier letter regarding the sale of the timber—delayed in delivery—saying that only the trees above 8 inches in diameter will be taken. I am so glad the place will not be stripped bare.

We are now located in another very pleasant camp in the woods, with the men still resting and getting into shape for further service. Not the least attractive feature of our



present camp is a little wire inclosure inhabited by one large black rabbit, which wears a red ribbon that shows off his color very effectively, and two half-grown white ones. They are very tame, and whenever anyone passes within sight of their inclosure stand up on their hind legs with their noses through the wire begging for weeds. We also have a large friendly gray-and-white Tommy. Our dog views the rabbits with great interest and the cat with great respect.

Your apprehensions lest Wilson may incline to favor too easy terms for Germany when peace comes remind me to speak of an incident that occurred while we were up on the line—several incidents, in fact. These were the shooting over of barrages of propaganda missiles. We sent over thousands of them, a great waste of money in my opinion, for the only sort of propaganda which can impress a German has to hurt him physically. The more relentless the President can make the Germans believe we are, the better for us.

The Huns also sent over some of their reading matter, including among other things big pictorial sheets demonstrating that the Allies had used pictures of former Russian atrocities as illustrations of German atrocities in Belgium and Northern France. A great crowd of soldiers gathered to look at one of these sheets, and the following verdict rendered for the crowd by one of these plain men will do your heart good, I know: "These pictures don't prove a damn thing except that the Germans can make pictures lie. Didn't they destroy Belgium when it was neutral? Well, what they *did* proves what they are." So you see the Kaiser's money is equally wasted on propaganda.

I continue the picture of health. The thistle inclosed is one of the same sort I used to find back in the environs of New York. There are many more of them here than I



saw there. Much love to Dad and yourself, and regards to the friends.

QUINCY.

REST CAMP, July 14, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Your hope as expressed in a recent missive to me, that the next draft get ——— simply echoes a sentiment I had already expressed to you, I think. But the individual I really want to see them put a uniform on is ———. About the worst stuff—in spirit, I mean—that I have seen has been the leaves from his own notebook while over here as a war correspondent. The notes were so obviously those of a mildly and complacently interested bystander patronizingly favoring the show with a passing glance. He is a poseur, the sort of individual, a mixture of fatuity and real talent, so admirably selected by Gilbert and Sullivan for the hero of *Patience*. There is no excuse for being out of service which I hold in greater contempt than that of family responsibility, the one that he and ——— offer. In the contingent of drafted men sent to my company there were a number of married men whose services at home are really needed by their dependents, I know, because they come from the class which always earns its bread by the sweat of its brow.

For a man of still undetermined possibilities for real usefulness like John Purroy Mitchel to die when such parasites as I have been referring to continue to exist, is shameful. I was not entirely surprised at the news of Mitchel's death. He was a bunch of nerves, and nerves are bad things for aviators to have. In fact, I think that the physical requirements for the aviation service must have been waived to admit him. I was afraid that he would die by accident, but it was too bad that the accident could not have been averted until he had had the pleasure of bringing down at least one Hun.

Much love to Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.



The German army virtually lost the Champagne battle of July 14 to 19, for which they had so long made ready, on the very first day. The completeness of the French preparations baffled all their plans. They fought on for four days, but made a final retirement on the night of July 19-20. The American troops behaved with wonderful coolness and valor. A French writer spoke of them as going in as if the field of action were a football ground. General Naulin issued a General Order praising them. The losses of the 168th were 35 men killed and nearly a hundred wounded. The Rainbow Division were the only American troops in that battle with General Gouraud's army. Orders relieving it were received at 9 o'clock on the night of the 18th, when the result of the battle was no longer doubtful. It withdrew to the rear on the 19th. While in a reserve position, during the struggle or just after its close, Mills wrote:

July 18, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: I am writing to you literally from the field of battle about which you will read long before this reaches you.

Although in reserve, our battalion suffered its heaviest casualties to date in the resistance of the Hun attack which began three days ago. Considering the strafing to which the locality we occupy was subjected, it is remarkable that our losses were not heavier. I do not know why any of us should be unscathed, but I am still in that condition at present along with the great majority of the outfit.

So far as our sector is concerned—and we are informed that the same holds true along the entire front of the drive—the Hun effort was wholly abortive. From papers found on captured Germans we know that their schedule called for the reaching of their primary local objective by



8 A.M. the 15th, and their principal local objective by that evening, whereas they did not even advance as far as our plan of battle had allowed for their coming in the initial push. For the present we are simply waiting to see whether they want any more, trouncing them roundly with artillery in the meantime.

Personally, I do not believe it possible for the line to be broken here, or anywhere else within the attack area. If the French were caught by surprise in the last Hun drive preceding this one, they assuredly were not this time. The extent and precision of their information was amazing. We knew the exact hour when the Hun barrage was to—and did—drop. And the one we touched off just a few minutes in anticipation was so intense that it's a wonder to me it left any room in the air for the Hun projectiles to get by.

Prisoners taken assert that our artillery fire was so intense it rendered organization for the initial assault impossible. I can well believe this, for you could scarcely stroll across a place two acres square before the show started without stumbling on a battery of the famous 75's or larger guns waiting—with ammunition corded up all around and all their data for the area they were to fire on—for the "supermen" to come on. Never having seen it, you could not believe how thoroughly a battery of 75's can be concealed right out in the middle of an open field before your eyes.

For the present my company is sitting very comfortably in a nice dry dugout, a very large one, two stories underground, waiting, like Mr. Micawber, "for something to turn up." The men's spirit is fine, and any of the ——— Dutch they get tangled up with will hardly appear later in anything but casualty lists. The way the men stood for the first time an artillery fire—H. E. and gas shells mixed—which may well be described as withering makes



you proud to be an American. From German prisoners we learn that the readiness of the American soldier to take and give punishment has had a profound effect already on the private soldiers of the German army, who are amazed to find American soldiers on every front they attack, and are depressed by the knowledge of our numbers.

If the Huns are held in their present attempt, it will be much more surely the beginning of final defeat for them than was Gettysburg for the Confederacy.

Our division is somewhere on the field of the 1915 battle of Champagne. Much love to Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.

Along with the command, withdrawing the Division and of the same date as the preceding letter, came other orders assigning the regiment to a new area of battle, for which it took up the march after a brief rest.

The troops in the dugouts suffered intolerably from the foul air caused by their crowded condition and long confinement from July 14 to 19. To escape suffocation, they were sent out in relays for fresh air in the midst of the constant rain of high explosive and gas shells, and many casualties were due to this unavoidable exposure. Mills makes no mention of this in his account of the battle, but his friend, Captain L. M. C. Adams, after his return from France, described the suffering of the men in reserve. He also spoke of the fact that the French lost almost all their artillery horses early in the engagement. With the determination of saving the guns if the fortunes of war went against the Allies, the horses had been stationed much nearer the front than usual. They were spied out by enemy airmen who signalled the range to the German gunners and the resulting slaughter was frightful.



## CHAPTER XIII

A SOLDIER'S DREAM—AFTER THE CHAMPAGNE DEFENSIVE, THE CHÂTEAU-THIERRY DRIVE—FULFILLMENT OF FATE AND SUPREME SACRIFICE—ASLEEP IN FRANCE—TRIBUTES.

WHEN Mills's trunks came home to his parents, these verses were found in one of them:

### RECOLLECTIONS A. E. F.

When this cruel war is over, and we've laid aside our hates,  
When we've crossed the bounding billow to our loved United  
States,  
When I sleep in thin pajamas, not in sweater, socks and pants,  
I will think about the billet where I froze in Sunny France.

When I sit all snug and cozy, and it isn't any dream  
That I hear the radiator hissing merrily with steam,  
When the house is warm and comfy, this idea I'll advance,  
I'll forgive the heating systems that are all the vogue in France.

When I watch an open fire eating up the seasoned logs,  
I'll recall the sappy sticks fresh cut from sodden Gallic bogs.  
When I hear the fire crackle as I watch it jump and dance,  
I'll forget the smoking fireplace I froze beside in Sunny France.

A soldier's daydream! But Mills never came home.  
His next battle was his last. He lies buried in France,  
and his parents have decided after consulting the depths  
of their hearts that he would choose to rest there himself,  
awaiting the last trumpet call.

His closing days and the circumstances of his crowning



sacrifice are now to be recorded. Only a week of his life is left. As the great Champagne defensive battle reached its close another life and death struggle was in progress to the left between Soissons and Château-Thierry; it was the great offensive movement generally spoken of as the Château-Thierry drive, which was the beginning of the end of the war. The French were forcing back the German invaders, and reinforcements of fighting troops of high quality were needed. On the night of July 18 at 9 o'clock, the orders reached the 168th to proceed to the new area of danger. The regiment marched during the dark hours and the 19th found it at Camp Attila north of Chalons, where it was allowed to rest for about three days. Mills wrote some word on every day of this stay; on the last, a long and intensely graphic account of the Champagne combat. To the very end, his plan of dwelling on the peril happily escaped without allusion to what might be ahead is faithfully maintained. How vain the precaution may be seen from the fact that the letter of July 22 did not reach New York until August 23, nearly a month after his death. On the next day, August 24, 1918, a telegram from the War Department announced:

Lt. Quincy S. Mills missing in action.

In these last letters, however, there is a distinct change of tone. The note of hope and confidence which he kept up for the encouragement of his father and mother and anxious friends throughout the correspondence, despite his own misgivings revealed to his comrades, gives way to an accentuation of the risk of battle coupled with a new suggestion of consolation. He now dwells on the satisfaction to his own soul of his participancy in the war, no matter what the cost, and he appeals to his parents' pride and patriotic devotion to conquer their bereavement.



Who can say that, as he penned these lines, which thrill with emotion as deep as it is restrained, a premonitory shadow did not rest upon his spirit?

July 19, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: When I wrote you yesterday I told you that all reports indicated that I was having the privilege of witnessing a part of what would prove to be the German Gettysburg. To-day's news of the Allied victory in the Château-Thierry region seems to indicate that this was an even truer interpretation than I realized.

Château-Thierry itself seems likely to prove an even greater Sedan, with victors and conquered reversed this time.

If I should prove "out of luck" you may know that at any rate I *knew* that Germany was beaten, and any civilized human being would die happy in the knowledge that he had played even an insignificant part toward bringing this to pass.

As one of my corporals wrote home to his mother to-day: "I have seen war at its worst and men at their best"—and I will add that it has been worth while living for.

I would not have you think that I have not been scared by what I have been through, but the truth is that I have been worse scared by thinking about it afterward than I was at the time.

You will rejoice to know that General Foch has formally credited the success in the West to the iron resistance offered to the Hun onslaught by the Allied army on this front.

Love and lots of it.

QUINCY.

July 20, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: The Allied success grows, and as it does, so does my elation.

A bunch of Hun prisoners who passed through us to the rear to-day was certainly a nondescript lot: A few husky



young men, mixed in with a number of mere youths and men above age and physically unfit.

Here are some French forget-me-nots I picked to-day.  
Much love. QUINCY.

July 21, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Many of the French think that the present blow will win the war speedily; none of them fear any further drives of "frightful" proportions from the Huns. This will prove the last stupendous German effort, they say; their elation now that the safety of their beloved Paris is assured is pathetic. And the fervor with which they bless the Americans is touching. They certainly think that we are *the* people.

The futility of the Hun effort before us continues to amaze me more the more I think of it. They had altogether 225,000 men on a very short front, and these have been shot all to pieces. Captured German officers confess themselves stunned by the ferocity of the opposition they encountered. And the reasons they suggest for their own failure are equally amazing. "We hadn't enough machine guns." "Our artillery was insufficient." Think of such statements from Germans!

There can be no doubt that the defence here was organized as Verdun never was. And the thing that is the most encouraging about it all was that the Huns threw every ounce they could spare against this sector, as it was the key to the success of their whole plan.

As soon as I have the opportunity I will write you at length about the events of the past week. Love.

QUINCY.

July 22, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: Well, I have been waiting all week for an opportunity to write you a real letter, but as day has



succeeded unto day there has been always plenty to do. But I do not kick at that. This has been an eventful week in world history, and if I have been kept busy incidentally to the doing of big things I am proud of it—and more than glad that I have been here to be kept busy.

To begin at the beginning: The last Hun effort began officially in the early hours of July 15, but actually the battle started before midnight of the evening before, and July 14 has been made a doubly glorious day in French history. It was just about midnight when the German bombardment opened, but the guns that were to decide the fortunes of the day and of civilization, the 75s and the 155s manned by French and American gunners, had begun to speak in a mighty chorus half an hour before the first Hun lanyard was jerked. And it was this initial Allied artillery fire which went far toward disorganizing the Hun attack and breaking up the drive that was to have set up the Prussian eagles in Paris. Perhaps there was to have been a little breathing space between this drive and the final stupendous onslaught that was to have set the iron heel on the capital of France, but this was avowedly the beginning.

And to-day the flower of the German army has been blown to atoms; the picked divisions that were to prepare the line for the final assault on Paris are as completely destroyed as the army which Napoleon led up to Moscow, and the army which was to have rolled over the Allied forces to the Seine is broken up, sent hither and there to be fed in to stop Foch's offensives; instead of gaining even a kilometer von Ludendorf and von Hindenburg have actually lost many, along with many thousand prisoners and many guns.

As I say, it was about midnight when the Hun bombardment started; I can assure you that I did not stop to look at my watch when the long sinister roll to the north opened



and the shells began to sing and burst around us. Everybody had been aroused half an hour earlier by the violence of our own cannonade. The French had the dope even to the exact minute of the beginning of the Hun infantry assault, 4:45 A.M., and they forestalled the Hun bombardment by opening with our batteries, masked in every hill and hollow, on the positions where the German infantry had to form and on their batteries—300 of them, or 1200 guns, detailed to blow us off the map in our sector.

From 9 o'clock on, our artillery had been unusually active; at about 11:30 the whole country on our side of the line was a sheet of flame from the mouths of cannon. And still scarcely a shot from the Huns. That is their way. They save it all up and turn it all loose at once. But this time they saved it all up and then couldn't turn it loose. It had seemed that our guns could not have increased their fire, but at the moment that the Huns fired their first salvo from the whole length of their line as far as we could hear, from the east to the west, our 75s and 155s literally leaped from the earth and began to tear at their target like a tremendous pack of ravenous dogs rending their quarry to pieces.

And so they tore and tore and tore all night and into the day and until the afternoon, until the last German gun ceased to answer. They gassed and shelled the Hun batteries until at times the fire against us almost died away; they blew the Hun's attacking lines into Eternity, they blasted the shattered divisions that tried to reorganize for another effort toward noon, and they fired point blank into the thin lines that made the final hopeless effort to reach our positions.

What the artillery did not smash the machine guns, lying silent in concealed positions until this moment, piled up in windrows across the wire-strung fields like rows of human grain felled by a gigantic sickle. The Germans



were numbed; they tasted of their own Frightfulness in a proportion that they had never dreamed of and they could not realize that their defeat was true. Such artillery fire captured officers had not conceived possible. Listening to our artillery, it seemed as though the 75s were firing clips of shells like those loaded into machine guns and automatic pistols. And it was on Bastile Day that the gunners and their helpers in French horizon blue and American olive drab seized the first shells from the mounds stacked up like cordwood around the guns that stood with open breeches ready to blow Kultur from the face of the earth, pushed them home and opened the fight which, so far as they knew, might have ended for them in a vast Thermopylæ. For they knew only that the Hun had decided that the sector in which we stood was the essential key to his own movement; they knew the true frightfulness of the concentrations that he did not hesitate to make to carry such a point; and they knew that they had been told that the line upon which we stood was to be held at all costs, even to the last man and the last gun. And, shoulder to shoulder, the Americans and French stood ready to make the sacrifice.

But it is now all a tale that is told. The war is not yet ended by any means. There may be many months yet of bitter fighting. But the backbone of Prussian aggression has been broken. The German armies may gain here a little and there a little. But the fear of their rolling, a vast tidal wave of barbarism, over civilization, is past and gone, and free men can draw their breath once more and know that the world is to continue to be a fit place to live in.

And I—it is enough for me to know that I have played a part, however small and insignificant, in this epic day, and that, whatever the sacrifice I might have been called upon to make, I would not have been found wanting.



Which brings me down to the less important subject of my own personal experiences incidental to the battle. When I jumped out of the door of our barrack shack it was to see shells cracking all around, to feel them as well as hear them and see them flashing like local lightning bursts in our fir grove and in the woods all around. Branches of trees were crashing and the air was full of the hum of pieces of high explosive shells. And just as I got outside the gas alarm sounded. You can imagine how pleasant it was groping in a gas helmet through the darkness to the dugout. The way lay down a little narrow-gauge railway track used for hauling munitions, and twice on the way shells burst so close that they threw dirt all over me, but somehow I got there. Then it was necessary to shepherd the men of my platoon, guide them to the stairway of the dugout and get them down. Why we were not all knocked off as we stumbled around in the darkness God only knows, but I had not a single man of my platoon killed, although several sustained painful wounds. All things considered, the losses of the companies of my battalion in dead and wounded were amazingly slight. Not a man was killed in getting to the dugouts but several were wounded, and our dead met their end in carrying these wounded to the hospital!

In this regard, I blame higher authority, which knew the hour when it was believed the Huns would start raising hell, for not having had every man underground long before things commenced. This lack of judgment and foresight is just the sort of thing that I have been so hot about all the time. But this incident is past, and enough of criticism for the present.

The men being packed into the shafts and on the stairways of the dugout, I stood in the trench at the head of the stairway until daylight. The gas shells fell only fitfully, so that most of the time we could keep our masks



off, fortunately. The absence of gas, with which the Huns usually drench the reserve positions, amazed me more and more as the night passed. One hit less than ten feet from the trench at the head of the dugout stairway, but all of us had our masks on before the stuff got to us. Not until the battle subsided did I comprehend the reason for the absence of gas. Orders found on killed and captured German officers showed that they were to have been in Suippes,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  kilometers behind us, by 8 A.M. the morning of the 15th, and in Chalons-sur-Marne, 22 kilometers from the Hun starting point, by night. The Huns did not wish to impede their prospective rapid progress by running into their own gas, so they shot over just enough to make us put on our masks, and thus increase the confusion and their chance of getting us with high explosives. But thanks to a brisk breeze the little they did put over was quickly dispelled, and we had to wear our masks hardly at all. I have not heard of a single gas casualty in the sector.

But after looking at the fashion in which they ploughed up the whole surface of the camp it is more and more of a mystery to me why we did not suffer heavily from shell fire. Not a tree but had been gouged by a shell fragment, and the ground in our grove was literally carpeted with fir branches. Of course all the shells did not drop at once while we were passing through; had they done so, it would have been our finish. They fell during a twelve hour bombardment; lucky for us they were scattered!

To show how utterly the Huns failed in their scheme of rapid advance, they did not penetrate and establish themselves closer than 1,000 yards to our intermediary line—and a splendid one it was—selected ahead of the one for our stand to the finish. And then the French counter-attacked the next day and drove them out of the area back to our front line that they had bought at such terrible



cost. At a few points the Huns did manage to penetrate to our intermediary position even in the face of machine guns planted every 50 yards—think of it!—but, each time, they were hurled out instantaneously. At one point they thus reached the Alabama regiment's intermediary position, but two companies of the Alabamans, singing "When the roll is called up yonder we'll be there," struck them like a hammer of steel—and did not bring back a single prisoner from the mass they literally picked up on the points of their bayonets and pitchforked back to the 1,000 yard limit. Indeed prisoners were desired on the Alabama front, and a lieutenant finally got one back—but he had to throw himself in front of the Hun to keep him from being bayoneted, and even then the mad Alabamans got him through the leg. At another point the Huns got close to the New York regiment's (the old Sixty-ninth) intermediary position to make a lunge for it, but the New Yorkers leaped from the trench with a yell, caught the Boche between our trench and our wire and bayoneted every one without themselves losing a man.

Our division was put in fast company for the fight—Blue Devils on one side of us and Algerians on the other—and it more than justified its right to the honor. No wonder that when a French soldier meets an American his hand comes up in salute and he ejaculates from a face wreathed in smiles, "Camarade!"

After the action quieted down on the afternoon of the 15th with only our guns working—they continued to bark savagely for another 12 hours after the Boche artillery quit—you can imagine our grim hours of waiting, wondering if the Hun would come back at us with a mightier effort than ever and drown us in gas. All night we waited with hardly a Boche shell falling, and our own guns working less incessantly, but with the sinister roll of the battle still rumbling away to our right and left, particularly



to the left in the direction of Rheims. And then came the news of Foch's counter-attack, brilliant in its conception and masterly in execution, and men wearied by two nights' vigil were electrified in a second. It would have made your heart leap to be an American to have seen the blaze in my Sergeant Scott's eyes as he said to me: "Lieutenant, we're just a-rarin' to go and get them ——!" And they were, too. They would have stuck through hell on the last stand position, but their first taste of victory was sweet and they wanted to get out and at their enemies. Scott has been recommended for an officers' training school, by the way, and will go soon and *get* his commission. See how my judgment has been vindicated. Koester has just been commissioned at one of these schools and sent to another division than ours.

Then came the humorous side of war. On the body of a Hun messenger was found a message to his commander relating how he had "swept over the enemy" with his detachment of five tanks and was "pursuing them in the direction of Somme-Suippes." The particular humor of this message was that according to the Boche officer he had run his Juggernauts right over us. You should have heard the men laugh! The tanks had all been shot to pieces. There was another shout over the yarn about a Boche prisoner brought in on the morning of the 16th who was reported to have inquired as they started marching him down the road how soon they would reach Chalons. He explained, according to the story, that the Kaiser had decreed when they started the drive that they were not to eat until they reached Chalons and that he was pretty hungry.

The prisoners I wrote you of as having been marched by here were a sorry lot, most of them men of 50 and boys of 16 in uniforms baggy and out of all proportion to the sizes of the wearers. You will be glad to know that our



dog Bum survived gloriously to dash out with us to view the parade of Germans and that he nearly barked his head off at them. The blood curdling yells let out by our men as they ran toward the column caused the French cavalry escort to close in on all sides, and the Huns appeared almighty glad to have them there.

The later news establishes that the Allied victory was not as overwhelming as we had at first been led to believe—in an army, news of victory or defeat is magnified a thousandfold by the wind of rumor which brings it. It will hardly be a German Sedan, but it is a German Gettysburg, and more. It would not surprise me if this blow to German prestige should send Austria reeling from her feet. And the effect in Germany itself will be far more far-reaching than on the battlefield, for the greatest menace that the German war lords have erected for themselves is the necessity of proving themselves always victorious to their own people.

In the meantime, here we are having a breathing space back from the noise of battle before being used again where we can do the most good. There is plenty doing here, though. For instance, I inclose a piece from the wing of a Hun airplane that I saw brought down by two Frenchmen reeling out of space from a height far beyond the reach of the naked eye whence the noise of the battling machine guns had come to us only as a faint “pit-pat” scarcely to be noticed. Unfortunately the two Boches in the plane were not killed, but the crews of three other planes bagged here by the French yesterday *were* killed, as they should have been, either in battle or in crashing to earth. The fabric from this airplane wing is another evidence of the Hun’s shortage of raw materials, for it is of linen, not silk, the ideal stuff for such service. Do not get the bit of airplane cloth close to a light, or it will go up like celluloid.



I received one letter from you the evening of the 14th, just as our guns started to booming, and two more to-day. Thanks for the *Childe Roland*. There is more to write but no time at present. I know that New York is wild with excitement and joy over the victory, and is justly proud of the part that America has played in it. One of our divisions that acquitted itself with distinction had never been under shell fire before. Active operations are likely to continue for some time, I believe, but *not* with any Hun menace. Much love to Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.

Here are a piece of Queen Anne's lace and a common ordinary clover blossom which came from right outside the billet where I am sleeping now. The lace was plentiful around school, but since then I had seen none until I arrived here.

When all this is over I may feel like a little vacation, and a vacation in France. I am in love with this country and its people. And now I suppose you will be thinking some of them must be in love with me. Well, some of them *do* think pretty well of me. Love. Q.

The 168th broke camp on the night of July 22, marched through Chalons—all the marches at this period were made at night—and at 4 A.M. of the 23rd entrained at Coolus. A day was spent in a railroad journey which passed through the suburbs of Paris, so that the men could see the Eiffel Tower from the car windows, but which ended at night at Changis near Meaux, about 75 miles almost due west of their starting place. Here there was a rest of about twenty-four hours and here Mills and Lieutenant Pearsall were notified that they were to be promoted to be first lieutenants. Mills used the occasion to write one more note, the last he sent home, probably the



last lines he ever put on paper. It reached his parents a month later, on August 23, along with his letter of July 22, written two days before. Here it is:

July 24, 1918.

DEAR MOTHER: I have been informed to-day that I have been recommended for promotion, and that the recommendation is likely to be acted on any day.

The situation continues highly favorable for the Allied armies and you should be very happy.

Much love to Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.

At 9 o'clock on the night of the 24th, the men were loaded upon auto trucks and went rolling away north over the inky roads. They travelled all night, now progressing, now halting as the way was clear or obstructed. They dozed or struggled to keep awake. Silence, for the most part, fell upon them. What strange communings with their inward selves there must have been upon that weird and fateful progress through the dark into the dreary dawn of a day of threatened death and horror.

The trucks halted in the early light, just outside Épièdes, a small town in the Bois de Fère in the Department of the Aisne northeast of and not far from Château-Thierry. The stiffened and tired men dismounted in a soggy, drizzly atmosphere into a battle-desolated country. The great drive north, of the Allies, was in progress. Desolation and glory were stalking hand in hand as the Germans retreated, bitterly contesting every foot of the ground over which they had swept as ruthless invaders four years before. The Twenty-sixth, the New England Division, had been forcing back the enemy for many days, covering itself with honor. The Rainbow Division was now to relieve its decimated and exhausted units. Mills and his



comrades literally descended from their rude transport wagons into the thick of battle on this grey, damp, cheerless morning of July 25. Alighting, they were formed up and ate a mouthful of breakfast from their emergency supply, which they carried individually. In such hurried movements, the camp kitchens could not keep up with the Division. Soon the men were marched forward into some woods two miles to the north of Épièds. Outposts were thrown forward and, as the Germans were shelling the tract and searching it with machine gun fire, holes were dug into which the men crept for protection. The woods were torn by shot and shell, and the earth was a wilderness.

At this time and place, trench warfare had been abandoned; the fighting was relatively in the open. It consisted of alternate dashes forward by the American troops, driving the Germans before them, and pauses to recover breath, reorganize the units and consolidate the hold on the newly gained ground. The advance line where held by the 168th had reached the edge of a wood, part of the Fôret de Fère, and to the north lay a cleared rectangle about one kilometer or perhaps 250 acres in extent, the Croix Rouge farm, where Prince Eitel Fritz had made his headquarters for many weeks in the riotous days of the expected seizure of Paris. The trees were sadly torn by the storm of shot and shell of previous days; the farm and portions of the wood were still strongly held by the Germans and the fighting across them had been terrible.

On the 25th, however, as the Allies held the aggressive and were quiescent on account of the exchange of divisions, there was no incident to vary the more or less continuous bombardment. The early part of the 26th was equally stagnant. At 3 o'clock, however, the order came to renew the attack. The First and Second Battalions of the 168th were engaged in it, the Third being in support.



Lieutenant Quincy Sharpe Mills

1861-1917



## One Who Gave His Life

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### Lieutenant Quincy Sharpe Mills

October, 1917

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The Americans drove the Germans back with severe rifle fire and threatened bayonet charge. But the resistance was firm; every foot of ground was contested. The Prussian Guard was holding the enemy's line. One of the bloodiest struggles of the war developed. Hour after hour it went on. Major Stanley's Second Battalion manoeuvred, fired, took cover, rushed forward, took cover again, always moving on toward the Croix Rouge farm road, its objective.

Around 4 o'clock, Company G was ordered to back up Company F in an attack to be made across an open field of oats. Both were in the wood at its edge; the Germans began a concentrated shell fire and there was no shelter except the scattered trees. "We could do nothing but trust in God," writes Captain Frank B. Younkin, the commandant of Company G, describing the moment.

But Mills had the impulse to act. His constant solicitude for the safety of his men was strong upon him. Alone, he went forward to the edge of the timber, in face of the fire, vainly seeking for some sort of cover to which he might guide his platoon. He found none and gave up the search. It was now between 4:30 and 5 o'clock. He turned back toward the advancing line and had gone a distance of some thirty-five yards when a German artillery shell hit the ground within a few feet of him and exploded. Fragments of it struck him and he was instantly killed.

It was a woful day for Company G, that 26th of July. Every officer in it was hit except Lieutenant Frank S. Pearsall. Lieutenant Rubel was killed at the same moment with Mills by a fragment, probably, of the same shell. Seventy-two members of the 168th gave



their lives that terrible afternoon between 3 o'clock and sundown; more than five hundred were wounded.

The regiment still advanced after Mills fell. It swept on past his body to the objective set for it. Next day the Third Battalion took the lead, reached the Ourcq and crossed the river under cover of the mist at daybreak. By noon, it carried the crest of Hill 212. The Hill was taken and retaken at fearful cost in life. Only on the 31st, when reinforcements came up, could the line push forward. Then it went on through Sergy to the heights and forests north of Nestles and later to the Vesle and to Fismes. The battle was the most trying and costly that the Iowa regiment engaged in. In the seven days' fighting from July 24 to the 31st, it lost 1482 men, or fully fifty per cent of its effective strength at that time. Of these, 227 men were left sleeping under crosses at the Croix Rouge farm, on Hill 212 and on the banks of the Ourcq.

On the morning of the 27th, when the Second Battalion was withdrawn to the support positions, Mills's comrades went out to find his body. Lieutenant Pearsall had seen him and Lieutenant Rubel dead the evening before, but was guided to the exact spot where he lay by an officer of the 167th Regiment. He searched the clothing but found nothing of value, so he returned all the articles to the pockets. Mills's revolver, wrist watch and binoculars were not found.

A grave was dug practically where he fell. Rubel was laid near him, and about them were seven of their men who had fallen. They were all wrapped in their blankets—naturally no coffins were available—and laid in the earth that they had consecrated with their blood, rever-



ently but without ceremony. It will be seen that the account cabled to New York and cited in *The Evening Sun's* editorial given at the beginning of this book was erroneous in some details. But in fact, Sergeant Hartzell, who was aid to Chaplain Robb of the Regiment, carefully noted the location and marking of all the graves. Mills's was 25-A, on the map known as "Condé-en-Brie." However, he no longer lies there. His body has been transferred to the Martyrs' Cemetery near Château-Thierry, where it lies in a section at present used entirely for the dead of the Forty-second Division. According to a notification sent to his father and signed by Colonel Charles C. Pierce of the Quartermaster's Corps, acting as Chief of the Graves Registration service, and dated December 27, 1919, the new grave is No. 27, Section H, Plot 1, American Cemetery 608, at Seringes-et-Nesles, Aisne. It is near, but somewhat north of the locality where he was killed. His father and mother have decided that he shall rest there. They believe that this would have been his wish. They have formally advised the War Department to this effect.

Not until August 24—only two days less than a month after Mills's death—was any word received by his family from the Government. Through some strange complication, the news then cabled to the War Department was that Lieutenant Mills was missing in action; his parents were so notified on August 24, and the newspapers published the announcement. Terrible anxiety, and uncertainty more torturing than the finality of death were suffered in consequence. Inquiries in all directions proved unavailing until strong newspaper pressure was brought to bear; then, on September 3, *The Sun's* War Correspondent in France cabled *The Evening Sun* office: "Lieutenant Quincy S. Mills killed by high explosive shell near Épieds on July 26." On September 22, the



fatal news was officially communicated to Mr. and Mrs. Mills.

In the interval, letters from him constantly arrived, keeping alive vain hopes. They had been written and despatched prior to July 26, but it was hard to realize that these vivid utterances were as if from the dead. The reasons for the delay in notification of his death are plausible if not satisfying. From the beginning of Foch's offensive, the casualty lists were so heavy that the War Department was always weeks behind with the announcements. This does not explain, however, the blunder in the first message as to Mills's fate. The notification of Lieutenant Rubel's death did not reach his family for a week after the first message to Mills's, though both men fell at the same moment.

In the days of agonized suspense as to her son's fate, Mrs. Mills wrote to Colonel Roosevelt, asking if he could aid in securing certain information as to Quincy. This was the reply he sent:

OFFICE OF  
THEODORE ROOSEVELT,

*The Kansas City Star,*  
New York Office,  
347 Madison Avenue,  
September 3, 1918.

MY DEAR MRS. MILLS: I sympathize most deeply with you. Believe me, I would do anything in my power to help you, but there is absolutely nothing I can do. I could not do it for my own son Quentin when he was killed; I was not able to do it for the scores of mothers and fathers who have appealed to me as you have. In the case of Quentin I made no inquiry whatever, for there was nothing I could do. In the other cases all I can advise is to communicate instantly through your local Red Cross branch, with the Red Cross. They have a special bureau which looks after cases like that of your gallant son.

I am exceedingly sorry that I am powerless to help you in



your great affliction. I need not say to you how deeply I sympathize with you.

Faithfully yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

In May, 1919, when the first of Mills's trunks to arrive from France was delivered to his parents by the Effects Bureau of the War Department, there was found in the tray a large unsealed envelope on which was written:

In case of my death, the inclosed letters are to be mailed to the persons to whom they are addressed.

QUINCY S. MILLS.

Only one letter remained. There had been two but a memorandum explained that he had mailed one to its destination. It seems strange that his instructions regarding the other were disregarded. However such is the fact. The letter was addressed to his mother; it was a word of farewell. It is undated and affords no precise clue as to when or where it was written. From the expressions as to his brief experience in the army and to the uncertain outcome of the conflict, Mrs. Mills deduces that it was penned to forestall eventualities shortly before Mills first entered the trenches in February, 1918, leaving his baggage behind him and facing the peril which ultimately was realized in his death. That this deduction was correct has since been proved by information received from Lieutenant Pearsall and Captain Adams stating that the baggage of the 168th was stored in warehouses behind the lines when the soldiers went into the trenches in February, and that they never again had access to their trunks.

In its noble devotion of himself to the cause his country had espoused, in its lofty appeal on grounds of spiritual



duty for acquiescence by his parents in the decree of fate, this is the crowning utterance of a life of high ideals:

MY DEAR MOTHER: I am writing you here a letter which may very well be made too long and cannot very well be too short, for farewells are best when not long drawn out.

For yourself, I would have you bear in mind the immortal philosophy placed by Maeterlinck in the mouths of Mytyl and Tytyl: "Where are the dead?" "There are no dead!" In my brief experience in the army no truth has been driven home to me so forcibly as this. Live by it.

For myself, I would have you believe that whatever end I met, I met it with an even mind, constant in the conclusion that I would rather have gone out to this war and not come back than not to have gone at all. My chief regret, if I may not live to see the end, is that I may not witness the triumph of right over wrong in this the most terrible eruption of the forces of reaction in the history of man. That these forces can triumph is unthinkable; if they are to win I would rather die now than witness the victory.

It is a great comfort, greater than I can tell you, to realize that for the future you and Dad will have sufficient of this world's goods to assure you against worry. I would advise you to realize on your property and utilize the proceeds so that you may both get the most out of life, and to do this at once. I regret that you are too prone to grieve over matters which are rendered only worse by repining, and trust that you will have the greatness of spirit in this trial to see to it that your satisfaction at having had a son to give to such a service overbalances your sorrow at having lost a son. In a case where there was only one thing for the son to do there should be no room



for vain regrets on the part of his mother. Remember me but do not become morbid over me. That would be the greatest dishonor you could do to my memory.

With more love than I can express for Dad and yourself.

QUINCY.

During the period of uncertainty as to their son's fate, Mr. and Mrs. Mills wrote many letters to officers of the 168th Regiment, asking for information. The answers came with words of praise and consolation, which though they could not heal the wound in their hearts yet helped to soothe the pain. Colonel Matthew A. Tinley, the commander of the regiment at this time, under date of October 29, after expressing his regret at the suspense they had endured, went on:

It was my pleasure to know your son, and my regret that I did not know him better. It is useless for me to attempt to tell his mother of the clean, fine qualities he possessed, but it will be gratifying to you to know that others recognized and appreciated those qualities. Your sacrifice in this struggle has been supreme, and we can only hope that the end gained will be commensurate with the price paid.

To the end Quincy did his duty as you would expect, manfully and cheerfully. He met his fate leading his men, and his death was instantaneous. Quincy and twelve of his men were buried near together; in all about twenty-five of our regiment are grouped there awaiting the hour for return. Your son gave his life for the welfare of his fellowmen, and he is now enjoying the reward of a life well spent, duty done and his labors complete. We who are left behind, very naturally and selfishly, regret his going and long for his return.

There is nothing we can say to lessen your sorrow, Mrs. Mills, but we do want you to know that we share it, and like you await the hour when his loss will become a sweet memory with the sting softened by time.



Major Claude M. Stanley, who commanded the Second Battalion, wrote on August 21, confirming the official notification. He added:

I am glad to tell you that I am proud to have known Lieutenant Mills, and to have had him as an officer in my battalion. He was a fine officer, and faithfully performed his duties to the end. He was killed, instantly, on the afternoon of July 26 when this battalion was making an attack on a place known as Red Cross Farm, northeast of Château-Thierry. I saw him only a few minutes before we went into the attack. He was cheerful and happy. He and Lieutenant Rubel of Co. G were killed together, and were only a few yards from where I was at the time.

I feel that my loss of him is great. You may always know that he did his full duty, and in this hour of your great sorrow may God's richest blessings be yours.

The Chaplain, the Rev. Winfred E. Robb, wrote assuring Mr. Mills that his son had not suffered from his fatal wound. Death, he said, was instantaneous.

Captain Frank B. Younkin, commander of Company G was wounded severely a short time before Mills was killed. He was more than six weeks in hospital. As soon as he was able, on September 18, he wrote:

I cannot write a letter of sympathy such as I would like. It was such an awful blow to us all to see Quincy and Sol both go, and I can only say that every officer in the regiment, and all the men in Co. G join me in extending sympathy to you in your great sorrow.

Quincy died as he lived, a true, faithful officer, and if he had had more consideration for himself instead of looking out for the safety of his platoon he no doubt would be alive to-day. No doubt you wish to know just how he was killed, and I will tell you as nearly as I can from what others have told me, for I was wounded a short time before. . . .



While I know this is an awful blow to both of you, as well as ourselves, it may comfort you to look upon your loss as a sacrifice for democracy and the freedom of the world. If there is anything I can do to be of comfort to you, I trust you will not hesitate to ask me. If I am fortunate enough to return to the States, I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you both.

Captain Younkin added in a postscript assurance that Mills had been recommended for promotion. He wrote again on October 24, giving particulars as to the location of the grave on the Croix Rouge farm. He then mentioned the killing of Lieutenant Nelson on October 7. After returning to America, he wrote on July 24, 1919, saying:

On the eve of the first anniversary of Quincy's death I feel it only fitting that I should drop you a few lines. We have been home some two months now, and I am again back in my business which I found well taken care of by my brother during my absence. I found my wife and boy looking well, and so glad to see me. In fact everyone was. I never realized I had so many friends until I got back.

Just a year ago to-day, we were all in a village called Changis, near Meaux. It was from here we took French trucks for the Château-Thierry front, and what was to be our really first great battle. I can well remember Quincy coming up to me before we got into the trucks and asking where we were going. But at that time none of us knew anything.

I trust that this finds both of you well, and that it may in some way help you in your sorrow.

Lieutenant O. B. Nelson, whose fate Captain Younkin told in one of his letters, had written on September 26:

I wish to express my sincere sympathy for you, his parents, and I want to assure you that I certainly miss him. He was my Buddy in the company, and we were always together whenever we could be. He was liked by every member of the company, and every man misses him.



## One Who Gave His Life

Lieutenant Mills was killed while leading his platoon into action a short distance north of Château-Thierry. His platoon was right along beside mine. I was on the right and Lieutenant Mills on the left, advancing toward the Germans, and Lieutenant Mills died fighting like a true soldier. I was wounded on the same day, went to the hospital and was there for a month when I recovered and returned to our company.

Another, whose sympathy and practical help with necessary information touching the recovery of Mills's effects were deeply appreciated, was Lieutenant Frank S. Pearsall. In a letter dated October 15, he says:

We were advancing through a thick wood, Quincy was on the left and I on the right. They were shelling the woods heavily, and the company became somewhat disorganized to a certain extent. I went around and tried to get things straight, and while on this mission is when I saw Quincy. He and Lieutenant Rubel had both been killed. I was the only officer who had not been hit, but at the present I am in the hospital, having been hit three times in the last drive. I thought of writing you after the July drive was over, but instead wrote to Mr. Pierce, one of Quincy's friends at the City Hall, and told him to convey the news to you. I do hope he has fulfilled my request.

We all miss Quincy, as he was loved and respected by everyone, especially by the men. Quincy and I got closer to one another after we came over here, and we agreed upon almost every question. I found him a very broad and fair minded companion. The only time we would disagree on anything would be at night when he wanted to sleep, and I wanted to talk, so you see there was not much disagreement between us.

Lieutenant Pearsall wrote again on November 6, furnishing details of Mills's end which have been embodied in the account given above. In response to an inquiry that had been made he said the dog Mills had been interested in still lived and was a pensioner of the regi-



mental kitchens. From Marshall, Texas, on May 30, 1919, he wrote a letter giving advice as to the best method of recovering some mislaid baggage. On one point, his view is interesting and no doubt well grounded:

As for Quincy's pistol and field glasses, I never saw them, but will explain what I think became of them. You see, at first only the officers and a few of the men had pistols, and just as soon as a man fell who had a pistol the men would make a rush to get it, as they all wanted one. This, I think, was O.K. Why a pistol idle, when there were plenty of men to use it?

Quincy was killed late in the afternoon of July 26, and early next morning when I went out looking for him, a 167th Regiment officer took me to where he lay. I searched him and found nothing of importance, so put the articles back into his pockets. I could have taken better care of his effects but for the fact that I was the only officer left, and we had to attack again that day, and every day for six following days.

Sergeant Will Scott, of Company G, in whom Mills had taken much interest, replied to a letter from Mrs. Mills asking for information

The last time I saw your son he was leading his men bravely, and toward the enemy. We were in the drive between Rheims and Soissons. The last town I remember going through was Épiéds. We were driving the Germans before us, and the fighting was quite heavy.

I was wounded about the same time Lieutenant Mills was killed. We miss him very much, and extend our heartfelt sympathy to you, his Mother, who will miss him far more than we. We are glad to be able to write that he died a soldier's death, fighting the enemy to the last—a firm, true, loyal American citizen.

By an odd coincidence another young native of Iredell, Henry S. Grose, was drafted into Company G, in the process of filling up the ranks after the heavy losses of the



July drive. Mr. Mills heard of this and wrote to him. He answered from the Y. M. C. A. headquarters in Burgh-rohl, Germany, on March 20, 1919, recalling having as a small boy seen Mr. Mills. He had not previously known, however, that he was Quincy's father. He continued:

I did not know your son personally. The officers and men both speak very highly of him. They say he was a good officer. I know he was because this is the best company in the A. E. F. I have been with it since August 26, 1918. I never saw a better set of officers than we have.

I showed your letter to the boys. They were glad to know that it was from their beloved lieutenant's father. They said to tell you that they appreciated him very much. One told me that he was wounded when your son was hit. He says that he was a brave man and the best officer he ever was under.

One more comrade's letter must be given here. It was assuredly born of a beautiful inspiration. It was written by Lieutenant L. M. C. Adams, who later became captain of Company H, from Chaumont, Haute Marne, on November 24, 1918. It read:

MY DEAR MR. MILLS: The men of the American E. F. have set aside this day as one on which we shall all write "Dad's Christmas Letter." Every man here who has a father at home is to-day sending him a message of love and thanks for the early training which made us ready to come over here when our country asked us to.

I have just written a long letter to my own Dad, and while doing so I could not help thinking of the fathers who would get no letter because their boys had made the greatest sacrifice a soldier can make. My association with Quincy was very close, and naturally my thoughts turned to you. I know that you and his mother miss not only the Christmas letter, but all the others which he was in the habit of writing. I know that a letter from someone else cannot begin to take the place of his,



but I want to do a little something in his stead, even as I know he would want to do for me.

Mrs. Mills knows that Quincy and I were in the same company at Plattsburg and that we were assigned to the 168th Infantry at the same time. He was in G and I in H, so we were close together all the time. We had many long talks together. Most of them concerned the things at hand, but often we went back into our past experiences and ideas. We came to think a great deal of each other, although there were, of course, many points on which our opinions differed.

I was not with the regiment when they went into the advance in which he lost his life. I had gotten into trouble a few days before when we were on the Champagne front. Quincy had hunted up the ambulance for me, and had helped put me into it. He was one of the last of my friends whom I saw before they went into the big fight. I have heard the story of his death from several of the officers and men who witnessed it.

I do not know just where he is resting now, but I am making an effort to find out. I want to visit the spot before I leave France. If possible I will bring you a photo of it. I know that it is in one of the many places which the United States has taken over from the French, and which will be cared for permanently by the people of both great countries. Personally, I think that it is the only proper resting place for those who gave up their lives on the field of battle.

I know that he must have written you of his great admiration for the spirit of the French people which makes them all feel, even in the darkest hours, that to die "For France" is the noblest end which can come to a man. We marvel at the way the old mothers and fathers of this country who have suffered for years, and given up perhaps five or six sons, still go their way sustained by pride that they were able to make the sacrifice for their beloved France.

Now, in the days of rejoicing that Peace and Victory have come, these people seem to be more than ever imbued with the spirit of pride. Their cemeteries have been put in wonderful condition. Every grave is covered with flowers and flags.



Every family, no matter how poor, has done its best to show the world that it contributed to the cause.

I trust that you and Mrs. Mills will accept my heartfelt sympathy, and that, in spite of your great loss, this Christmas may not be entirely dark, but that it may be brightened by the knowledge that he met the fate which he anticipated, and made the sacrifice which he was entirely ready and willing to make.

Sincerely yours,

L. M. C. ADAMS.

In the same spirit, Mills's old friend, Dr. Wallace Hoffman, wrote from American Base Hospital 65, with which he was serving in France, on Mothers' Day, 1919, telling Mrs. Mills how he was thinking of her and of Quincy. He said:

Quincy and I always had a great deal in common. Just a year ago when I entered the service he wrote me a characteristic letter. It was spring and I think he was in Lorraine. My answer to him was returned to me just a few days ago. . . . With your sorrow there must also be blended pride in the part your son played in the big affair.

A letter from David F. St. Clair, of Washington, D. C., a family friend, dated September 22, 1918, is of strong interest as evidence of Mills's state of mind as he entered the army:

He may never have told you, but from conversations with him I know that he died as he wished to die. Once in the little sitting room where you now are he said to me, in speaking of the necessity of universal military training, that he would die on the battlefield to emphasize the wisdom of establishing this principle in the polity of our government.

"But that is not your choice of death?" I said.

"It is," he replied, "I shall go that way."

I shall never forget the seriousness of his tone of voice, and



ever since I learned he was in France I have looked in every casualty list to see his name among the dead.

Quincy's sense of duty glowed as that of a Crusader. He was one of the most serious souls I have ever known. When he differed with me—as he always did with such good will—it was with such strength of conviction, that I sometimes felt mentally staggered and paralyzed. “Why,” I said to myself, “I must be wrong. It can't be any other way.”

The end of his life has emphasized as nothing else in his life could his devotion to duty, but without his life, as you knew it from day to day, his death would mean but little.

Besides the letters to Mills's parents given above in part, Lieutenant Pearsall sent a communication to Mr. Al. Pierce, the City Hall representative of *The Evening Sun*, giving the details of the fatal struggle at the Croix Rouge Farm. This resulted in the publication of an article fully narrating Mills's end. The facts have all been incorporated in the foregoing pages. It included, however, this tribute by Pearsall to his lost comrade:

I joined the regiment the same day Lieutenant Mills did and being a U. S. R. we became fast friends, particularly after we got over here. I found him to be a real man in every way, well liked by all the officers in the regiment and especially by his own men. He had a way of handling those under him by kindness, a thing which cannot be done by everybody for the lack of understanding. However, he got the work out of them in this manner, which I think is a great trait to be blessed with. We all mourn his death, and vow that it will not have been in vain.

Lieutenant Pearsall himself is a fine sample of the American volunteer soldier and officer. He was only a boy of twenty-three, a bank clerk in the little Texas town of Marshall when war was declared. He volunteered, took his training at Camp Leon Springs, Texas, and was



ordered when commissioned to the 168th. In the six days after Mills and Rubel were killed, Younkin and Nelson being previously wounded, Pearsall carried the whole responsibility of commanding Company G in the continuous fighting to the banks of the Ourcq. He was at last badly wounded, passed several months of pain in a Paris hospital and was discharged from the army on his home coming in the spring of 1919 as ten per cent permanently disabled. In addition, he lost practically all his baggage and effects and never received promotion that was promised him. With characteristic courage, he resumed business in his old home state and is making his way in the world by his own efforts.

A beautiful act of kindly service was performed by Mrs. Mabel Fonda Gareissen after the removal of Mills's body from the grave on the battlefield and at a time when his parents were deeply anxious as to the disposition made of it. She had already written a letter of sympathy and comfort from Limoges, France, where she was doing war work. In it she dwelt upon the friendship between Quincy and her own dead son. She wrote again in January, 1919, assuring Mrs. Mills of the care taken to make certain the identity of the bodies of the soldiers. She also gave details of the measures taken to care for the graves. She added a promise to visit Mills's grave at the earliest opportunity. This promise she kept in February, and, afterwards, sent a letter to Mrs. Mills giving an account of her pilgrimage which was most comforting both in the information it conveyed and through its consolatory spirit. She wrote from Bordeaux on February 24, 1919, after a visit to Paris and a side trip to Château-Thierry. At the latter place, Lieutenant Read, the aviator-photographer, interested himself in her mission and allowed her the use of his car and chauffeur. She describes thus her journey:



The day I went to Quincy was a glorious spring day. All nature was glad to be alive. When we reached the great meadows the songs of larks filled the sunlight as if to tell us "There is no death." Never will I forget the effect it produced on us all.

Quincy's earthly body has been brought out of the forest and has been placed with many of his comrades of the Rainbow Division—in fact all in this little cemetery are of that division. Officers and their men lie side by side regardless of rank, as it should be, for there is but one rank in Heaven. The cemetery is not yet finished, others are to be brought from the forest to fill it, among them Lieut. Rubel. Stout tree posts surround the lot, stretched well with heavy barbed wire. The men lie head to head and a simple cross marks each grave. When it is finished, the flag, cut round with fibre ribbon, red, white and blue, will decorate the center of each cross.

The greatest care is being taken of the fallen, I am glad to say. As fast as possible they are removed from their solitary, temporary places and arranged in cemeteries. I wanted to carry greens and flowers for you, but it was impossible to get anything anywhere. We even looked about the woods.

As I stood over Quincy's grave in the midst of all these who fell right there of the Rainbow, a longing came over me to have my darling with his own, for with all the anguish of the parents there is something, in spite of it, noble and beautiful. These brave splendid young lives went out together and what they left behind rests side by side. I am certain when you come you will feel it all as I do. And with the awful void they have left in our lives, could we as devoted, unselfish mothers wish them back in this mess? But perhaps you do not realize what is ahead. We over here see no light for this martyred generation to which our boys belong. At least *their* troubles are over.

There were numerous newspaper appreciations. That of *The Evening Sun* has been given at the beginning of this book. A column was dedicated "To a Friend" by *The Charlotte News*. The writer, Julian Miller, a fellow stud-



ent at Chapel Hill, speaks of the high hopes, the great expectations for Mills's career that were entertained when he graduated from the University. His rapid advancement on *The Evening Sun* assured friends that the forecast was about to be realized. But, "like many other virile young Americans, he volunteered for service and was among the first to reach the land of fury yonder." Then came the supreme sacrifice. "If many young men like this splendid fellow, with such ennobled ideals, with such prospect for brilliance in his profession, with such radiant hopes centered in him, paid the price for its possession, Épieds was a costly acquirement."

The Greensboro, N. C., *Daily News* published a fine tribute of which the following was the concluding paragraph:

The honors won by this brave youth add a new lustre to the history of his native State, his native community and his alma mater. His example furnishes a new inspiration to duty and sacrifice to those who were privileged to know him and call him friend, and to all the great procession that preceded and followed him through the University's doors.

In the *Williamson County Sun* of Georgetown, Texas, of which John M. Sharpe, a first cousin of Mills on his mother's side, is the editor, a sketch of his career with excerpts from his letter of July 22 appeared on September 6. "It may be," says the opening part, "that he is in a prison camp; it may be that his blood has been spilled on the fields of France; but it matters not, if he is dead, his life has been given willingly for mankind, for the life and liberty of the men, the women and children of France, of Belgium, of England, of the United States and of the World."

In "The Sun Dial," *The Evening Sun's* editorial page "Column," this poem from the pen and the heart of Philip



Coan, whose appreciation of Mills as an associate in editorial work has been given, was printed on November 8, 1918:

To Q. S. M.

Good friend, they tell me you are dead in France.  
Between us, greater than the torn expanse  
Of gray Atlantic, brims the darker flood . . .  
And so the place is empty where you stood!

A thousand times we talked in lighter days—  
Alas—till interchange to either gaze  
Had made of the companion's soul and creed  
An open page one scarce could help but read.

Now, poor remembrance seeks your song or pun  
Drowned in the bitter rush of Acheron;  
Did aught dwell so with you of all I said,  
Does something, friend, of me lie with you dead?

What thoughts this hour and aye are yours? I trust,  
Those clarion thoughts that dashed your dust to dust!  
So, like the Grecian woman struck to stone,  
You live the unspent hour ne'er overthrown.

Full few of those the breast of earth shall keep  
May win at dying such an ample sleep;  
What spirits, cleansed as yours with battle fire,  
Its glow departing, shall be quenched in mire?

Some may forget, some, thousand times recite  
Their hero season's legend long grown trite;  
Safe from the touch of Time to chill or soil,  
You, victor of your life, hold fast its spoil.

None has a greater claim to share in the praise bestowed upon the Rainbow Division in a General Order reviewing its record, than Mills, although he had answered his last roll call three weeks before it was published. In this



Major General Menoher, the commander touches on the trench experiences in Lorraine, the Champagne defensive and the Château-Thierry drive. He says:

For your services in Lorraine, your division was formally commended in General Orders by the French Army Corps Commander under whom you served. For your services in Champagne, your assembled officers received the personal thanks and commendation of General Gouraud himself. For your services on the Ourcq, your division was officially complimented in a letter from the Commanding General, 1st Army Corps, of July 28, 1918.

To your success, all ranks and all services have contributed, and I desire to express to every man in the command my appreciation of his devoted and courageous effort.

The Association of City Hall Reporters held a special meeting on September 16, 1918, in Room 9, City Hall, New York, their official headquarters, and adopted resolutions upon the death of their former member, instructing the secretary to send a copy to his father and mother:

The Association of City Hall Reporters has learned with deep regret of the death on the battlefield in France of Lieutenant Quincy S. Mills, long an honored member of this Association.

As a member of the reportorial and editorial staff of *The Evening Sun*, Lieutenant Mills was an industrious gatherer of news and a vigorous writer who lived up to the highest ideals of his profession. The members of the Association deeply deplore his death, but find cause for gratification that he died fighting in the greatest cause the world has ever known; fighting for humanity; humanity not only in the present generation, but for long generations to come. Truly it may be said of him that he fought a good fight in a cause that the world will ever remember.

Whereas, the Association has met in special session to take



action on the death of Lieutenant Quincy S. Mills, now therefore be it

Resolved, that these proceedings be spread upon the records of the Association, and that a copy thereof be sent to the father and mother of Lieutenant Mills as a token of the esteem in which he was held by his associates and fellow workers, and of their sincere regret at his death as well as an expression of their sorrow at their loss.

Mr. James Blaine Walker, then Secretary of the Public Service Commission for New York City, an ex-newspaperman and a member of the Association, was unable to attend the meeting. He wrote to Mr. Charles B. Hambridge, the President, a fine appreciation of Mills as a newspaper worker. He said:

Quincy Mills and I were friends for years. We worked on many stories together and have been thrown into that intimate contact which only newspapermen know. In all his relations he was a most honorable gentleman, a most competent reporter and a most likable fellow personally. With high ideals, with the strongest integrity of purpose and without any shadow of wavering on questions of right and wrong as well as upon questions affecting the public weal, he was admirably equipped to play an important part in the journalistic history of New York City. It was typical of the man to respond instantly to the Government's roll call, not reckoning the loss of his well earned place in the journalistic profession or the possible consequences of military service at the front.

Now that he has made the greatest of all sacrifices, I am sure his death was such a one as he desired. His career and his glorious ending will ever be an inspiration to his fellows, and, while we regret his death, let us all unite in honoring his memory and perpetuating the spirit of his life.

The members of *The Sun* (formerly *The Evening Sun*) and *The Herald* staffs, who had served in the army formed,



on September 18, 1919, a post of the American Legion with ninety-four members. They named it the Quincy Sharpe Mills Post in honor of their dead associate, of whose newspaper and military career they were equally proud.

On July 10, 1919, in the office of *The Evening Sun*, then at No. 170 Nassau Street, New York, a bronze tablet, subscribed for by all the staff of the paper, was unveiled with simple exercises. It has been since removed to the new offices at No. 280 Broadway, where it is conspicuous on the wall of the large news room.

The inscription on it is this:

THE STAFF OF THE EVENING SUN  
ERECTS THIS MEMORIAL IN HONOR OF THREE  
OF ITS MEMBERS WHO FELL IN THE GREAT WAR

LIEUT. QUINCY SHARPE MILLS  
CO. G, 168TH INFANTRY, U. S. A.  
KILLED IN ACTION NEAR ÉPIEDS, FRANCE  
JULY 26, 1918

LIEUT. CONRAD CRAWFORD  
CO. B, 47TH INFANTRY, U. S. A.  
KILLED IN ACTION AT HILL 220 NEAR SERGY, FRANCE  
AUGUST 1, 1918

LIEUT. STUART EMMET EDGAR  
103RD AERO SQUADRON, U. S. A.  
KILLED IN LINE OF DUTY NEAR ST. MIHIEL, FRANCE  
AUGUST 17, 1918

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He that loseth his life shall find it.

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ERECTED

A.D. 1919



At the dedication, Mr. and Mrs. Mills and relatives of Lieutenants Crawford and Edgar were present along with the entire staff of *The Evening Sun*, many newspapermen from other offices and several members of the Mitchel city administration. The late George McLeod Smith, the Managing Editor, presided, paying tribute in a brief speech to the departed men and their spirit of devotion. The Rev. Duncan Browne, of Cragmoor, L. I., affectionately known among the soldiers as Chaplain Browne, unveiled the tablet. James Luby, the Editor of *The Evening Sun*, made an address in which he said:

Death loves a shining mark and he took of the best we had to give. It would be too heartrending to go here into all the details of recollection which in the present instance prove the truth of the old saying. Only a few brief words may be said. Indeed, in a sense, all words are superfluous.

Quincy Sharpe Mills, with whom I was intimately associated in his work here, was no longer a boy when the great call came to him. He had reached the maturity of early manhood and had attained it with a richness of spirit that singled him out from among his associates and fellow workers. He had already, for his age, made a success in life; he had entered upon a career which promised him profit and distinction. So far as human judgment could foresee, he had an unbroken future of advancement and usefulness before him.

Mills had a mind of admirable clearness and alertness and a judgment quick and sure, vigorous but temperate. His spirit was high, his instinct of service masterful; his courage absolute, his sense of right aggressive. He looked at public questions without any personal or interested bias. His work all aimed at the public good and the triumph of honor.

His private character was of a piece with his professional



attitude. Honor and faith and good intent animated his entire conduct and were transparently the principles of his intercourse with his friends and acquaintances. But, if his outlook upon life was essentially serious, I should do him an injustice if I ignored that other phase in which he was so very human. He had animal spirits, sense of humor and humor, a keen capacity for enjoyment and gifts for contributing to the keen enjoyment of all around him. He was as popular in the hour of relaxation as he was esteemed and admired in the serious pursuits of life. To-day his cheery voice is missed as much among us in the social hour, when thoughts are exchanged and the jest and the retort go 'round, as is his pen from the columns which it once strengthened and adorned.

Mills gave up a present such as few men attain at his age and a future that relatively few can look forward to, in obedience to a characteristic mandate of his soul. Seeing from afar the coming crisis, he devoted his leisure to preparation for it during two years. We all knew he would go when the time came. It seemed quite natural to us when he went. It was Mills's way. He went, not without a sense of the shadow of fate upon him. I believe, all his friends believe, that he did not expect to return. But he went. Hope beckoned him on in his chosen career. He had domestic allurements, present and prospective, to hold back his courage and devotion. But he went.

Death came to him in what seems an appropriate way. His men were under fire at a point near Épièdes, France, and in great peril. He went forward in the direction of the enemy seeking shelter for them. He stood alone when a shell fell beside him and exploding killed him. I think it was such a way as he might have chosen, himself, to die. At any rate, I know no better way.



The speaker next paid tribute to the courage and sacrifice of Lieutenants Crawford and Edgar. He then said in conclusion:

In putting up this tablet, I take it, we, none of us, imagine that we are doing anything for the men named on it. They have rounded out their life stories by their action and by their sacrifice which leave nothing for their survivors to add. Their record is written with finality in their blood; their reward belongs to another sphere of existence.

It is in one sense for the benefit of future people that we do this thing to-day, for the benefit of the generations of workers who shall come after us to this institution to carry on the work and uphold the traditions that these three first, and we, later on, lay down. To the coming ones, the children of to-day, we aim to throw the torch of inspiration whose flame the dead have made leap higher and brighter even as they dropped it from their failing hands. Our hope is that so long as words graven in bronze may resist the assaults of time, the spirit of courage and devotion which these dead men showed may flourish not only in hours of crisis but in the easy flowing days of peace in the purpose and in the performance of those who are to cultivate the field in which they once labored.

But at least equally with our regard to coming generations of *Evening Sun* workers, we put up this tablet as an expression of ourselves and our feeling as respects the deaths of these three and especially as regards the vicarious character thereof. The soldiers who went forth in this war to fight and die, went in the eye of history and in the whole broad scheme of things as the representatives of the American people, the spokesmen, as it were, of the dedication that was in every heart. These three seem to us in a peculiar way to stand as our representatives, as the champions of this unit of endeavor to which we belong.



We cannot but feel that we have a share in their death, a share both in its tragedy and in its glory, and if their death, while consigning them to the shades, has led us into a more blessed life of peace and freedom, there is therefore the strongest reason why we should unify ourselves in heart and mind with them and with their consecration of themselves.

But if we thus make their death in part our own, so would we also give them a part of our lives. We firmly purpose that they shall live in us and through us in memory and in inspiration. They are not altogether dead even in the earthly sense. They not only live in gratitude and honor but they shall live in guidance, in force, in the vitalization of good and right as active principles of life. We dedicate this monument to the identification of ourselves with them in spirit.

Not with idle grief, not with vain repining may their names be cherished but with serene trust that their sacrifice already is having its reward in the new life that they have entered, and with cheery confidence that even in the world they have left behind, flower and fruit will grow out of the seeds they have planted.

I will not say Goodby. These men remain with us more than ever the companions of our inmost spirits. I will not wish them rest. I cannot think of these ardent souls as dreaming through eternity even in visions of light or robed in clouds of glory. I will wish them effort and progress, upward struggle such as they delighted in while they were here. What finer prospect can I entertain to-day, what finer hope can I offer to those who loved and admired them, than that somewhere in the dim future, somewhere in the wide spaces of the ethereal universe we may find them, transfigured in sublime enterprise, once again showing us the way and leading us on?



## INDEX

### A

Adams, Captain L. M. C., 223, 441, 461, 468-470  
 Adamson, Robert, 152, 309  
 Aisne, 455, 459  
 Alabamans, 364, 451  
 Alexander, Dr. Eben, 86, 108, 113  
 Algerians, 451  
 Alpha Theta Phi, 103  
 Alsace, Front, 312  
 American Soldier, the, 253, 269, 277, 299, 306, 307, 310, 313, 316, 330, 331, 334, 336, 348, 350, 351, 353-356; 358, 366, 371, 381, 390-392; 402, 411, 413, 414, 416, 421, 422, 431-437; 439-441; 451, 452, 471  
 Amiens, 357  
 Andrew family, maternal ancestors of Q. S. Mills, 15, 16, 24  
 Association of City Hall Reporters, 167, 476  
 Ayres, Lieutenant Quincy C., 400

### B

Baccarat, 340, 342, 404  
 Badonviller, 330-333; 340, 341, 342, 347, 351, 353, 357, 364, 370, 375, 385, 388, 415, 417  
 Baker, Secretary of War, 314, 334  
*Balic*, the, 230, 231, 236, 237, 238, 240, 251  
 Barber in hip boots, 294  
 Baskerville, Dr. Charles, 113  
 Bastille Day, 448  
 Battle, Dr. Kemp Plummer, 74, 76  
 Bennett, Colonel Ernest R., 222  
 Benoit, Maire and Wife, 341  
 Blue Devils, 293, 451  
 "Blue Ridge, Footing It Through the," 81, 90, 92-102  
 Boche vulnerability, 291, 292  
 Brigade, 84th, 225

Bringle, of Salisbury, N. C., 428  
 Browne, Chaplain Duncan, 479  
 Bryan, W. J., 140, 159, 160  
 Bum, the mascot of Company G, 326, 327, 384, 416, 437, 453, 466  
 Buncombe County Club, 104

### C

Cambrai, 313  
 Camp Attila, 443  
 Camp Leon Springs, 471  
 Camps, 3-5, 426  
 Campbell, Douglas, 407  
 Candy, Soldiers' craving for, 318, 319, 348, 359, 364, 378, 379, 392, 394  
 Casey, Captain, 399  
 Censoring men's letters, 253, 265, 276-278; 289, 313, 315, 349, 355, 356, 381, 392, 435, 444  
 Châlons, 426, 443, 450, 452, 454  
 Champagne, 424, 426, 441, 443, 469, 476  
 Changis, 454, 465  
 Chapel Hill, N. C., 67, 70, 85-87; 92, 108, 474  
 Charlotte *Observer*, 73, 81, 95, 110, 112, 113, 114, 117, 119, 146  
 Château-Thierry, 85, 443, 444, 455, 459, 464, 465, 466, 472, 476  
 Chaumont, 267, 468  
 City Hall, 148, 150, 153, 154, 158, 164, 177, 285, 302, 309, 344, 350, 466, 471, 476  
 Civil War, influence on Q. S. Mills's family, 29, 30, 41  
 Coan, Philip, 168, 199-203; 475  
 Cole, Robert, 435, 436  
 Condé-en-Brie, 459  
 Coolus, 454  
 Cooper, Charles P., 114, 115, 116, 152, 153  
 Corey, Herbert, 350, 351  
 Courtisols, 424, 426



Cowan, Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Mills,  
42, 48-51; 414, 415  
Crawford, Lieut. Conrad, 478, 481  
Croix Rouge Farm, 456, 457, 458,  
464, 465, 471

## D

Davidson College, 35  
Delanne, Madame Victorine, 301,  
319, 320, 382, 404  
Democracy, American, French and  
English, 405, 406  
Dialectic Society, 70, 71  
Division, the Twenty-sixth, Yankee  
or New England, 455  
Division, the Twenty-seventh, New  
York, 220  
Doohan, John, 111, 112, 135  
Domremy, 397-399  
Dowd, Mrs. Frances Tunstall,  
59-60

## E

Edgar, Lieutenant Stuart Emmet,  
478, 481  
Editorials, examples of Q. S. M.'s  
in *The Evening Sun*, 169, 170,  
171, 172, 175, 176, 178, 180, 181,  
182, 183, 185, 186, 187, 189, 190,  
192, 193, 195, 196, 197, 198, 207,  
208  
Eiffel Tower, the, 454  
English women and girls, 247, 257,  
258, 265  
Épieds, 455, 456, 459, 467, 474, 478,  
480  
*Evening Sun, The*, Editorial on the  
death of Q. S. M., 3; 47, 74, 75,  
114, 116, 131, 135, 146, 148, 151,  
154, 155, 159, 160, 162, 164, 165,  
168, 171, 172, 173, 175, 185, 188,  
199, 206, 211, 216, 232, 278, 285,  
308, 314, 334, 383, 424, 435, 459,  
471, 473, 474, 476, 479, 481  
Eyre, Lincoln, 350

## F

F Company, 168th Iowa Regiment  
of Infantry, 457  
Fèvre Hotel, 301, 310, 320, 369, 380  
Fismes, 458  
Foch, General, 408, 420, 444, 446,  
452, 460

Fôret-de-Fère, 455, 456  
Forney, member of G Company,  
432  
*France, La*, Channel steamer, 261  
France, landscape and sundry as-  
pects of, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276,  
283, 284, 305, 306, 307, 320, 325,  
346, 369, 380, 387, 389, 395, 396,  
397, 423, 431, 435  
France, wonderful roads of, 346  
French forest conservation, 322,  
323, 414  
French fuel shortage, 269, 270, 286,  
287, 297, 313, 340, 387, 434  
French soldiers, fine physique of,  
262, 274, 290, 326  
French soldiers and people, 262,  
273, 274, 297-299; 320-325; 329,  
349, 381, 382, 399, 411, 434, 435  
French women and children, 276,  
309, 310, 326, 333, 338, 375, 412,  
426, 427  
French women at work, 274, 325,  
423

## G

G Company, 168th Iowa Regiment  
of Infantry, 223, 267, 295, 304,  
329, 330, 350, 359-364; 366, 367,  
406, 413, 415, 416, 418, 419, 425,  
457, 464, 467, 469, 472  
Garden City, 221  
Gareissen, Mrs. Mabel Fonda, 345,  
472-473  
Gay, Alfred, 249, 250  
Gaynor, William J., 148, 150, 151-  
153; 344  
German-American press, 424, 425,  
426  
German desertions, 402, 403  
German intrigue, 344  
German prisoners, 259, 265, 293,  
452  
*Globe*, the, N. Y., 302, 351  
Golden Fleece, 91, 102  
Gondrecourt Training School for  
officers, 301, 345, 359, 385, 386  
Gouraud, General, 424, 429, 439,  
476  
Governor's Island, 211, 228, 230,  
279, 286, 409  
Graham, Edward Kidder, 74, 75,  
179, 180  
Gramer, William A., 280, 283, 295,  
302, 304, 335, 351, 352, 355, 359,  
378, 388



Grave of Q. S. Mills, 459, 472, 473  
 Graves, Louis, 113  
 Graves, Ralph, 113  
 Gresham, Rev. LeRoy, 113  
 Grose, Henry S., 467, 468

## H

H Company, 168th Iowa Regiment  
 of Infantry, 468, 469  
 Hambidge, Charles B., 477  
 Hancock, member of G Company,  
 432  
 Hartman, of Co. G, 395  
 Hartzell, Sergeant Chester R., 459  
 Haute Marne, 267, 284, 468  
 Havre, 261  
 Hawley, Walter L., 148  
*Herald*, The N. Y., 270, 291, 384  
 "Heritage, The Price of Our," 342  
 Hill 212, 458  
 Hobbs, "Old Bill," cook for Co. G,  
 354  
 Hoboken, 151, 225  
 Hoffman, Dr. S. Wallace, 77, 82-92;  
 93, 94, 102, 408, 470  
 Hughes, Harvey Hatcher, 73, 77,  
 78, 85, 90, 102, 308

## I

Iowa, 222, 268, 277, 358, 368, 371,  
 458  
 Iowa officials inspect 168th, 223  
 Iowa, Third National Guard Regi-  
 ment of, 222  
 Iowa tobacco gifts, 283  
 Iowans, 246, 341, 342  
 Iredell Blues, 42  
 Iredell County, North Carolina, 9,  
 10, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25,  
 28, 38, 40, 41, 48, 467

## J

Jeanmesnil, 347  
 Joan of Arc, 321, 352, 398, 399, 400,  
 411

## K

K Company of the 168th Regiment,  
 345  
 Katzenstein, Charles, 136, 138  
 Ker-Avor, Camp, 341, 347, 372  
 Koester, Philip, 247, 248, 316, 452

## L

"Land of the Sky," 93  
*Landmark*, The Statesville, 42, 84,  
 137  
 Langres, 267, 270, 271, 272, 299, 301  
 Lamont, Hammond, 113  
 Lazenby, Miss Laura, 59-61  
 Lindquist, of Co. G, 360, 361, 363  
 Liverpool, 251  
 Logan, S. R., 73, 77-82; 90, 93, 94,  
 97, 99, 102, 104, 136, 137  
 Lorraine, Cross of, 352, 353, 402  
 Lorraine Front, 309, 312, 340, 341,  
 351, 357, 358, 370, 412, 417, 420,  
 470, 476  
 Luby, James, 308, 330, 336, 344,  
 401, 417, 479-482  
 Lufbery, Raoul, 407  
 Lyon, C. C., 350

## M

Mails from U. S. A., 239, 251, 271,  
 278, 285, 286, 289, 290, 303, 304,  
 305, 307, 308, 319, 337, 357, 358,  
 378, 396, 410, 424, 454  
 McAlarney, R. E., 113  
 McAneny, George, 161, 178, 206  
 McClellan, George B., 148  
 McCormick, Lieutenant Scott, 344,  
 345  
 McElwees, The, 286  
 McHenry, Captain Harry C., 342  
 McKee family, maternal ancestors  
 of Q. S. Mills, 14, 16, 17, 20, 24-  
 29  
 McKelway, Rev. A. J., 20, 21  
 McKnight family, maternal an-  
 cestors of Q. S. Mills, 21, 23, 27  
 Malgrejean, 401  
 Marne, 297, 420, 429  
 Marquis, Don, 281  
 Martin, Don, 384  
 Martin, Samuel L., 163-164  
 Martyrs' Cemetery, 459  
 Meaux, 454, 465  
 Menoher, General Charles T., 476  
 Mersey, the, 251  
 Miller, Dr. Grier, 289  
 Miller, Julian S., 473  
 Miller, Captain T., 210  
 Millikin, Lieutenant, 290, 317  
 Mills, Camp, 221, 222, 228, 232  
 Mills family, paternal ancestors of  
 Q. S. Mills, 7, 8, 9, 10, 24, 40, 41,  
 42, 43



- Mills, Henry Mansfield, paternal grandfather of Q. S. Mills, 40, 42; his home Q. S. M.'s playground, 49-56
- Mills, Miss Nannie Williams, 42, early recollections of Q. S. Mills, 51-54
- Mills, Mrs. Nannie Sharpe, mother of Q. S. Mills, 11, 18, 19, 27, 28-37, 42, 43, 47, 57-59, 65, 66, 215, 338, 339, 369, 427, 436
- Mills, Quincy Sharpe, *Evening Sun* on death of, 3; his antecedents and sacrifice, 4-7; *Tar Heel* editorial, 19-20; ancestral influences, 28, 37-39; birth and early years, 43-44; changes of home, 45, 46; at school, 46, 47; back in Statesville, 47; musical initiation, 47; two aunts' recollections, 48-54; his boyhood playground as he saw it, 55, 56; love of soldiering, of books, politics and pets, 56-58; no West Point ambitions, 56; a school clash, 59; congenial teachers, 59-61; preparations for college, 61, 62; serious typhoid attack, 62; a Florida romance, 62, 63; early peculiarities of taste, 63-65; the note of duty, 65, 66; effects of typhoid attack, 67; entrance to University of North Carolina, 67; success in college, 69; summed up in *Yackety-Yack*, 70; contributions to college publications, 68, 69, 70, 72, 73, 77; "One of the boys," 77; sketched by S. R. Logan, 78-82; reminiscences of S. Wallace Hoffman, 82-92; athletics, 92; "Footing It Through the Blue Ridge," 92-102; anti-Frat crusade, 102, 103, 104; activities at college, 104-109; graduation, 108; plans in life, 110; goes to New York, 110; former stays there, 111; finds quarters, 110, 111; successful job hunting, 112, 113; landing on *Evening Sun*, 114; early work and anxieties, 115-117; letters home, 117 *et seq.*; theatres, operas, etc., 118-127; pays debts in Statesville, 117; speech at Alumni Dinner, 118; musical and dramatic criticism, 119-127; moral standard in Art, 123, 127; not Puritanical, 124; books and views of books, 127-131; other recreations, 131-132; love for cats and other animals, 133-134; holidays far from home, 134-136; father's illness, 137; love of family and home, 137; new boarding house, 138; bachelor housekeeping, 138, 139; seeking political anchorage, 140; reunited with parents in New York, 141; search for religious system, 141; quaint marriage prospectus, 143; pays last of college debts, 146, 147; progress on *Evening Sun*, 146 *et seq.*; work on Hudson-Fulton celebration, 148-150; relations with Mayor Gaynor, 150-152; City Hall and local politics, 148-153; Albany and other political correspondence, 152, 153; reporting Roosevelt, 153, 155-158, 160; the Colonel's congratulations, 158; at National Conventions, 158, 159; encounter with W. J. Bryan, 159; Sulzer impeachment, 160; Mitchel Mayoralty campaign, 161; New Orleans trip and big news beat, 161, 162; in a cyclone, 162; relations with Mayor Mitchel, 162-165; memoir by Samuel L. Martin, 163-164; family and personal life, 165-168; early volunteer editorials, "The Great Vibrator," 169; "Pithe-kophagi," 171; various topics handled, 172, 173; becomes an editorial writer, 173, 174; preparatory reading and study, 174, 175; hundred word editorials, 175; various subjects and styles, 175-198; sulky politicians, 177; interests and opinions, 179-181, preparedness, 183-189, 191-194; early sympathy with Belgium and France, 184; the Great War, 185, 189, 190; labor selfishness, 182, 190; Mexican trouble, 185; disloyalty, 194-196; Joffre and Viviani, 196-198; last editorial, 197; paragraphing, 198; study by Philip Coan, 199-203; training for a foreseen emergency, 204; first Plattsburg encampment, 205-207; second, 209-210; drilling in New York, 211; war volunteer, 211; Officer's Training Camp, 211-219; relations with company commander, 214-217, 218, 219;



Mills, Quincy Sharpe—*Continued*

conscientious scruples, 213, 217-219; commissioned 2nd Lieutenant, 219; engagement to marry, 220; Masonic interests, 220; ordered to Camp Upton, 220; transferred to Mineola, 220; sent to National Guard at Camp Mills as extra officer, 221; temporary assignment to the 69th, New York, 221; life at Garden City, 221; final attachment to the 168th Infantry (Third National Guard of Iowa), 222; work training Company G, 223; false start for France, 224; experiences on the *President Grant*, 225-228; back in New York, 228; last days at home, 229, 230; sails for Europe on the *Baltic*, 230; safe arrival, 231; physique and personality, 231-237; letters at sea and from England, 238-260; *Baltic's* crew and passengers, 240-244; personal experiences on board, 244-251; soldier's letters as seen by the censor, 253; English impressions, 256-259; German prisoners, 259-260; letters from France, 261 *et seq.*; arrival at Havre, 261; training at Rest Camp No. 2, 261-266; contrast of British and U. S. mails, 264; at Fort de Peigney, 266-300; Christmas in mediæval surroundings, 267, 272, 275, 279; in charge of 50 men, 267; practice work, 280, 281; again the cat, 282, 289; timely tobacco from a friend, 283; fun buying shoes, 287; and New Year cards, 288; absorbing duties, 290; optimism as to Russia, 291; the German mind, 291-293; soldiers of all sorts, 293; peace aspirations, 295; Jeanne d'Arc medal, 296; feeding well, 297; cheap money, 297, 298; winning the Poilu, 298, 299; Y. M. C. A. charmers, 299, 300; commanding Co. G pro tem, 301; billeted in Hotel Fèvre, St. Ciergues, 303-329; the trench helmet and gas masks, 310, 311; prospects of the War, 312; light wines and beer, 315, 316; at *Théâtre des Poilus*, 324; sundry photos, 323, 328; experiences under fire at Badonviller, 330-

334, 340, 342, 343, 346, 347, 349-351, 358-364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 375-377; the American soldier, raider, 330; battalion staff service, 331; shells and gas, 331-334; contempt for slackers, 338; writing in a gunpit, 342; effects of bombardment, 343-344; officer's pay, 347; morals of American soldier, 348; newspaper visit under heavy fire, 350-352; sundry kinds of shells, 353, 354; tribute to the army mule, 354; American soldier's traits, 356; trench reports, 359-364; in combat position, 366; acute discomfort, 368; Ireland's mistake, 370; National against State commissions, 370-371; more anti-slacker wrath, 373, 374; non-combatants under fire, 375-376; cats of No-Man's-Land, 377; package week, tobacco and candy, 378, 379; Swiss huts in a hemlock forest, an ancient farmhouse, fun with a graphophone, 380-383; the company mascot deserts, 384; at Officers' School at Gondrecourt, 385-388, 392, 394, 395, 404, 407; gargoyles at Nancy, 387; second hitch in the trenches, 388, 392; souvenirs, 393; pilgrimage to Domremy, 397-399; regaining weight after trench loss, 399, 400; trench order, 401; as to Huns bombing New York, 401, 402; British humor, 405, 406; back to company G, 406; letters to Alice Hale Morris, 409-414; to Mrs. Cowan, 414-415; more trench work, 416; flowers from the brink, 417; incidents of the fight, 418-420; march to the Moselle and the Marne, 420; no fear of German success, 419, 420, 421; enthusiastic as to American army, 422; a problem solved, 423; resting at Courtisols, 424; again on the march, 426; puzzle of letter dates, 430; praise again for American troops, 432; their foibles, 433; the liquor question, 434; Rest camp, 436; from the battle field, 439; new area of action, 441; "Missing in action," 443; vain hiding of danger, 443; witnessing the German Gettysburg, 444, 445; details of Champagne vic-



Mills, Quincy Sharpe—*Continued*  
 tory, 446-454; wonderful French  
 foreknowledge, 447; personal  
 experiences, 449, 450; to be pro-  
 moted, 454-455; a weird night  
 ride, 455; arrival in Bois de Fère,  
 conditions, there, 455-457; seek-  
 ing cover for men is struck by  
 shell fragment and killed, 457;  
 first interment of body, 458, 459;  
 War Department news as to his  
 fate, 459; farewell letter, 461-463;  
 letters of sympathy to parents,  
 463-471; newspaper apprecia-  
 tions, 473-477; memorial tablet  
 of *The Evening Sun*, 478; address  
 of dedication, 479-482  
 Mills, Thomas Millard, father of  
 Q. S. Mills, 41-43, 137, 138, 141,  
 403, 413, 424, 425, 468  
 Mineola, L. I., 220  
 Mitchel, John Purroy, 148, 161,  
 162, 163, 164, 165, 177, 205, 207,  
 216, 217, 309, 372, 438  
 Montreal, 209  
 Morn Hill Rest Camp, 255  
 Morris, Alice Hale, 305, 409  
 Morris, Mrs. John, 329, 409  
 Morris, Mr. John, 409  
 Moselle, 420  
 Mule, the Army, 354

## N

Nancy, 340, 387, 395  
 Naulin, General, 439  
 Nelson, Lieutenant Oscar B., 273,  
 279, 290, 311, 312, 317, 318, 360,  
 379, 392, 465  
 Nestles, 458  
 Neufmaisons, 341, 347  
 Nice, 339  
 North Carolina, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 17,  
 18, 20, 22, 25, 36, 43, 48, 61, 62,  
 63, 81, 428

## O

Oak Ridge Preparatory School, 61,  
 62, 107  
 Osler, of Co. G, 401  
 Ourcq, 458, 472, 476  
 Outlook article by Q. S. M., 206

## P

Paper bombardments, 437  
 Paris, 270, 282, 312, 339, 350, 388,  
 420, 445, 446, 454, 472

Pearsall, Lieutenant Frank S., 223,  
 290, 317, 361, 401, 454, 457, 458,  
 461, 466, 471, 472  
 Peigney, Fort de, 261, 267-269; 271,  
 278  
 Pershing, General John J., 222, 314,  
 348  
 Pexonne, 340, 341, 347  
 Phi Beta Kappa, 51, 70, 103, 108  
 Pierce, Albert W., 344, 466, 471  
 Pierce, Col. Charles C., 459  
 Plantation Life in the 60's, 30-34  
 Plattsburg Training Camps, 92,  
 109, 204, 205-207; 209, 210, 211-  
 219; 222, 223, 227, 261, 267, 286,  
 344, 386, 387, 393, 394, 398, 404,  
 408, 469  
 Poetry, verses by Q. S. Mills, 63,  
 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 77, 105, 106,  
 107, 109, 144, 145, 166, 442  
 Post, the Quincy Sharpe Mills, 478  
 Prendergast, Comptroller William  
 A., 162, 206  
*President Grant*, steamship, 225,  
 228, 230, 231, 237, 238, 239  
 Prose skits in college, 72-73

## Q

Q. S. M., verses to, by Philip Coan,  
 475

## R

"Raid, The First," 331  
 Rainbow, 42nd Division, 221, 222,  
 341, 417, 424, 439, 459, 473, 475,  
 476  
 Red Cross, 394, 436, 460  
 Regiment, 165th (Old Sixty-Ninth  
 of New York City), 221, 451  
 Regiment, 167th (Of Alabama),  
 451, 458, 467  
 Regiment, 168th (Of Iowa), 222-  
 224, 228, 230, 232, 277, 303, 304,  
 324, 340, 341, 342, 344, 345, 347,  
 351, 357, 365, 403, 417, 418, 420,  
 421, 424, 425, 426, 439, 443, 454,  
 456-458, 461, 463, 469, 472  
 Reick, William C., 162  
 Reportorial work, example of Q. S.  
 Mills in *Evening Sun*, 156  
 Rest Camp No. 2, 261  
 Rheims, 427, 452, 467  
 Richmond *Times-Dispatch*, 73  
 Rimaucourt, 267  
 Robb, Chaplain Winfred E., 342,  
 425, 459, 464  
*Robesonian*, The, 110



Roosevelt, Theodore, 153, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 169, 170, 171, 201, 312, 460  
 Rubel, Lieutenant Solomon R., 223, 270, 290, 317, 323, 324, 338, 342, 345, 457, 458, 460, 464, 466, 472, 473  
 Russian views, 262, 291, 328

## S

St. Amand, 420  
 St. Ciergues, 301, 303, 304, 335, 340, 364, 369, 380, 411  
 St. Clair, David F., 470  
*Saturday Evening Post*, 330, 340  
 School, First Army Corps, 385, 386, 388, 393, 394, 401  
 Scotch-Irish in North Carolina, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 20-24; 28, 35, 37, 38  
 Scott, Sergeant Will, 366, 367, 452, 467  
 Segonne, General, 340  
 Sergy, 458  
 Seringes-et-Nestles, 459  
 Sharpe family, maternal ancestors of Q. S. Mills, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 28  
 Sharpe, Leander Quincy, maternal grandfather of Q. S. Mills, 15, 28, 29, 35-37  
 Sharpe, Mary Emmeline McKee, maternal grandmother of Q. S. Mills, 27, 28, 29, 30, 34, 406  
 Sharpe, John McKee, of N. C., 26  
 Sharpe, John McKee, of Texas, 474  
 Sharpe, Quincy, of Texas, 400  
 Sharpe, Mrs. S. A., 57  
 Simonds, Frank H., 172, 173, 383, 408, 428  
 Skinner, of Co. G, 359, 360, 361, 364  
 Smith, George McLeod, 162, 479  
 Smoke and smokers, 279, 283, 302, 314, 327, 335, 337, 338, 345, 359, 378, 379, 388, 394  
 Soissons, 443, 467  
 Southampton, 261  
 South Boston, Va., 45, 46, 395  
 Spirit of the French, 262, 273, 274, 329, 349, 399, 411, 469  
 Springer, Captain, 351  
 Stanley, Major Claude M., 224, 228, 267, 457, 464  
*Stars and Stripes*, 314  
 Statesville, N. C., 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 30, 31, 35, 37, 40, 41, 42, 43,

45, 46, 47, 48, 51, 56, 59, 61, 64, 66, 82, 88, 132, 133, 146, 147, 164, 278, 285, 322, 392, 401, 428  
 Steller, Captain, 223, 290, 317, 359, 367, 399  
 Stover, Charles B., 161, 162  
 Suippes, 426, 450  
 Sulzer, Governor William, 160, 171  
*Sun, The*, 113, 114, 163, 477  
*Sun Tobacco Fund*, 279, 283  
 Sykes, Lieutenant, of Charlotte, N. C., 284

## T

Taft, President, 140, 155, 195  
*Tar Heel, The*, 19, 70, 71, 73, 74, 85, 89, 103  
*Théâtre des Poilus*, 324, 325, 329  
*Times, The*, N. Y., 113, 115  
 Tinley, Colonel Matthew A., 463  
 Toul, 404, 408  
 Trenches, order to, 401  
 Trench rats and cats, 349, 368, 377, 391  
 Trench reports, 359-364  
*Tribune, The*, Chicago, 270, 291  
*Tribune, The*, N. Y., 114, 173  
 Turenne Barracks, 267

## U

*United Press*, 350  
 University of North Carolina, 19, 20, 62, 64, 67, 74, 76, 85, 86, 87, 135, 136, 147, 179, 224, 386  
 University of N. C. Alumni, 117, 118  
*University of N. C. Magazine*, 67, 70, 73, 86, 103, 106  
 University of N. C. Press Association, 70, 73  
 Upton, Camp, 220

## V

Verdun, 261, 391, 427, 445  
 Vesle, the, 458  
 Vincent, Robert W., 112, 113  
 Vosges, the, 301, 385

## W

Walker, James Blaine, 477  
*Wild Rose, The*, 425



- Willard, Dr., 289  
Williams, Dr. Henry Horace, 71,  
74, 76, 108, 165  
Williams, Jesse Lynch, 113  
Williams, Senator John Sharp, 18,  
19, 20  
Wilson, President, 35, 155, 160, 291,  
309, 437  
Wimbledon, Rest Camp, 255  
Winchester, 251  
Winchester Cathedral, 259, 404
- Wood, General Leonard, 312  
*World*, N. Y., 350
- Y
- Yackety-Yack*, 63, 70, 71, 73, 78,  
103, 104, 109  
Y. M. C. A., 299, 300, 364, 381, 436,  
468  
Younkin, Captain Frank B., 223,  
290, 317, 359-364; 367, 399, 401,  
457, 464, 465, 472











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